# SIGNIFICANCE OF ART

By

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By Eleanor Rowland

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART.
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## Studies in Analytical Esthetics

BY

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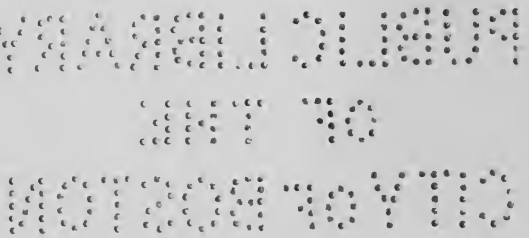

TO

PROFESSOR HUGO MÜNSTERBERG

THE HONORED TEACHER WITH WHOM I FIRST

BEGAN THE STUDY OF ÆSTHETICS

# PREFACE

To a thoughtful person who spends any portion of his life in the contemplation of beautiful things, it must occur at one time or another that there is a certain strangeness in grouping under one head such an enormous variety of objects as we find in our world of Art, and labeling them with one term. What common factor unites such diverse creations as a poem and a cathedral, a song and a statue, and makes it possible and intelligible to call them all art products?

The answers to this question have been many. The problem has been attacked from standpoints that diverge so widely that the discussions have easily failed to meet on any issue. From the sociologist, the scientist, and the philosopher, to the practical artist, repre-

senting every type of training and habit of mind, have come more or less comprehensive surveys of the various arts, and attempts to define the meaning of Art as a whole.

The historian is preëminently interested in what Art has been, and the reformer in what it should be. But to the philosopher or psychologist, the essential enigma is — what is it? That objects presenting diversity of material as wide as the world affords, and reflecting activities coextensive with man's whole life, can with any accuracy be brought into one group, and can produce certain characteristic states of mind, is indeed extraordinary. More than this, that certain materials should have been selected as most appropriate for clothing certain ideas, so that one idea flies to a garment of stone and another to one of words, yet both finished products remain art, is a puzzle that cannot

fail to tease the mind of one equally alive to the facts and to their apparent inconsistency.

That many roads to the problem suggest themselves is evident enough from the number that have been chosen. There is, however, a directness in the method of a certain great writer on æsthetics which commends itself by its simplicity, and in his case at least, by the results. Aristotle set out for an explanation of tragedy as a form of art. What common factor makes a complete tragedy of this or that impersonation of character? To answer this question he listened to the best tragedies. He spent time in their presence, observing what composed them, and exactly what made up his own state of mind as a spectator. He was then able to formulate an exposition of tragedy which has never been surpassed. If he had left us a similar analysis of the other

arts, such as that of sculpture with a dissecting of the "sculpturesque" emotions, the essentials of music and the common factor in all musical appreciation, much later work, and above all the present one, would not have been necessary.

Some of the arts have developed since his day, so that any ancient formula must have been in any case outgrown, but it is as a humble disciple of Aristotle's method that the writer has conceived the following studies. They represent an attempt to limit the provinces of certain arts, the ideas which these arts, better than any other of man's creation, can express, and the characteristic mental states that are aroused in appreciating them — states which, like the pity and fear of tragedy, *must* be aroused if an object is to fulfill the demands of its own particular art. What one art may do and what it can never do remain still as obscure in many

cases as if Lessing had never set the example of a masterly setting of limits.

This group of studies makes no pretense to cover the field of the fine arts. It represents merely the crystallization of some of the results of four years' teaching of æsthetics, and the arts which find no place in this analysis have been omitted because their treatment did not fall into a length and character coördinate with the other essays.

PORTLAND, OREGON,
May 1, 1913.

# CONTENTS


I. Sculpture . . . . . 1

II. The Minor Arts . . . 47

III. Painting . . . . . 83

IV. Music . . . . . 111

V. Art and Nature . . . . 153

# I

# SCULPTURE

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART

## I

### SCULPTURE

THAT our acquaintance with the world often dulls our appreciation of its real meaning has been a commonplace since the beginning of speculative thought. It was the task of Socrates, in Athens, to demand of his countrymen, somewhat too little aware of the mystery of things, that they define the nature of the simplest objects and give reasons for the most everyday pursuits. By exposing their ignorance in the matters of which they were most certain, he thus roused them to a more vigorous philosophy. It is profitable now and then, for us, as well, to

make a restatement of our old ideas, to "break through the crust of familiarity which tends to be deposited around well-known things," and to be as it were our own Socratic teachers.

Let us suppose ourselves, then, deprived of all acquaintance with sculpture as a fine art, and for the sake of an unprejudiced point of view let us imagine ourselves as entering a gallery of statues for the first time. It is all to be a surprise to us. Everything will seem astonishing. There is to be an impartiality of emphasis as if we had succeeded in combining the sensitiveness of a mature appreciation with the candid curiosity of a child.

Our questions when we are to be introduced to any new experience naturally fall into certain types. We ask, "What kind of thing is it to be?" "Are we to see, hear, or feel it?" "What is it made of?" "Why was it made?" "What are we to do with

it?" "How must we act when brought into its presence?"—and with such questions on our lips we are ushered into a gallery of sculpture, and told to find our answers as best we may.

We are on the threshold of a long room, around the edges of which are arranged images of men and animals. Some are cut from marble, granite, or softer stone, and others are molten out of bronze. They all stand raised from the floor on pedestals, or hang as reliefs upon the wall, but this artificial isolation only serves to emphasize a detachment which is already a conspicuous feature of their whole attitude. Here stands a youth in marble, well developed, nude, graceful, and with no apparent excuse for being, except that he exhibits a fine ideal of what a youth should be. There stands another boy, similarly well developed, although his build is somewhat different, and

the poise of his limbs and the direction of his glance are slightly varied.

We pass from one room to another, and lining every wall are quiet figures: some draped, some nude, some whole, some fragmentary, some of marble, some of metal, some alone, and some in groups. But despite their proximity, no statue looks at us or at its neighbor. The room is full of them, but they are solitary! Even when the figures make up one relief, and where they are engaged in actions which bind them seemingly together, they are curiously alone. A lady takes jewels from her handmaiden's box, in a gentle, idle fashion, as if despite her level glance she saw neither box nor maiden. An old man stands beside his son — a glorious youth, who (since this is a grave relief) presumably has died, although there is no suggestion of death in his perfect form. He gazes away from his father, just as his father looks past him,

while the dog at his feet snuffs for a footprint that he cannot find. We recall other groups, where despite the fact that centaurs and Lapiths struggle for the possession of the women, the contest is an impersonal one. Each Lapith, each woman, is in a world of its own, and carries with it an air of unique self-sufficiency, which in a figure like that of the Olympian Apollo is almost overpowering. His proud arm is extended over a struggle which he does not deign to watch, and his eyes are turned to a horizon infinitely remote. All this is not without its effect upon an observer.

The atmosphere does not invite words. Apparently the question as to what is to be done is not in order. There is nothing to be done but to look, perhaps to feel the smooth surface here and there, and to preserve a silence as of listening to a voice where no voice speaks.

In other rooms are more standing and sitting forms. One leans against a pillar, another holds her drapery, one glances here, another there. Their lines are subtly varied, and the figures differ in being more or less free-standing from their background. But all of them are quite simple, and wholly unconcerned with us or with each other. The titles on their marble bases read something like this: "Youth carrying calf," "Statue of a woman," "Athena," "Priestess," "Youth leading sacrificial cows," "Man with musical instrument," "Niké binding her sandal," "Seated goddess." There are warriors, too, and men on horseback. There are combats with animals and with gods. But most of the figures are doing nothing, or, when an action is introduced, it is of a nature whose triviality one would seemingly resent. We do not consider it the most significant act in the world to ride on a horse.

Why make a stone image eternally exploiting that act? It has never seemed momentous to handle a necklace, to lean on a spear, to hold drapery, to watch a lizard, to finger a reed; but as if even these vague pursuits were too arduous, the actors perform them with serene indifference, and by far the greater number make no pretence to occupation, but stand without apology and without concern.

Even the animals have caught this disregard of busy-ness. Many of them are represented in motion as the human athletes had been, but, as with them, the motion is successful, the muscular adaptation is secure. There is in every case an easy certainty as to the outcome, which makes the movement, however transitory, as stable as the pedestal beneath it. The questions arise, Why these acres of stone? Why this monotony of subject, gods, men, and animals at rest or in

ever-repeated action? Where is the dramatic interest to be found in such successful movement, such calm joy and such stable grief? Is not the only excuse for these stones' existence, that they represent life, and yet could we tolerate such passionless society or such meaningless pursuits?

We are asking these questions because we are here to question and not at all because we have felt incongruities in what we have seen. The trivial, the unimportant has affected us like grandeur. The lack of occupation in these figures abashes us as no reproof for inaction has ever done, and our separate restless efforts to understand, to investigate, to be well informed — all these praiseworthy anxieties lose their customary respectable footing, and take on a reversed color of contempt. Our activity becomes shamefaced before an idle boy in stone who plays with an apple!

Our point of view must not be confused with that of the historian of art, who informs us that all these actions were significant when the statues were chiseled. It, of course, is true that these seemingly unoccupied maidens held a votive offering in their hands, and by their presence before the temple reminded every beholder of the donor's piety. The athletic figures commemorated the Olympic triumphs, than which nothing could have a more serious meaning to a Greek mind. The pediment groups represented the most stirring combats in the Greek mythology, and those dignified figures on the Parthenon frieze were in the Pan-Athenaic procession which of all things stood for the glory and the culture of a city dedicated to Athena. The historian would then say, "If these actions seem trivial to a modern spectator, he has simply failed to understand them."

It is undoubtedly true that the Greek

sculptor expressed in his art the most important and profound ideas of his national genius. But all our observations nevertheless remain as true as before. Even the most tragic, the gayest, the most significant thoughts and acts of life were to the Greek artist tempered and made subject to the restraint of things as they are. He did not strive beyond bounds, but, as has so often been said, he chose rather to glorify his limits; and because this is also the spirit of sculpture, and because thereby this universal Greek spirit and this particular art have the same essential ideal, the sculpture of the Greeks was their especial glory. All that Greek artists did was good in this respect because, to a certain degree, this doctrine of restraint is the law of all art and of all life. It is not, however, with the other arts the absolute requirement that it is with sculpture. Therefore, although Greek architecture

is great, we can hardly say that it is unequaled. Greek painting — what we know of it — is superb, but we can hardly say that later men have not done as much. Though Greek literature is unique in its beauty, there have been literary Titans who broke its rules and followed other models. But Greek sculpture is not only unsurpassed: it is unequaled. For the world of art, sculpture is synonymous with Greek sculpture — and why? Because the simple dignity, the detachment, the essential preëminence of mere living lines and movements, whereas it may not be all of other arts, is the very kernel of sculpture.

To the modern art-lover, therefore, it is absolutely non-essential whether these figures were at one time religious, political, or commemorative — or, indeed, whether they signified anything whatever. We have lost nothing from the sculpture of the Greeks by embracing a different creed. Far from

enjoying their sculpture less than they, perhaps we enjoy it more! If our admiration of their work is so robust, with no admixture of solemnity from the religious motives of the sculptors, we must lay aside their motives as non-essential to the spirit of the work. In the same way that a statement of the evolutionary importance of the scents of flowers does not explain their appeal, so an historic account of the social and religious importance of Greek sculpture is not in the least an analysis of its essence.

We shall agree, I think, that it is not in point to call a uniform experience accidental. That which is inevitably present, as well as the inevitably absent in all good examples of a given art, must be regarded as the expression of some law, some deep demand, however unconscious were the artists of their obedience to it. We must begin, then, with the most incontestable uniformity we have

noted in the sculpture gallery, and that will be the actual material from which the statues have been fashioned.

We find in any artistic expression that some idea must be presented in material form to the senses. Both are essential, the idea and the substance in which it lives. There must be a harmony of the two, and in no art is it so easy to separate them — to comprehend our material, to name our idea — as it is in sculpture. We have found that sculpture expresses itself in stone and bronze. These two materials have been selected from all the possible substances which would have been much easier to work, and while exceptions in the way of wood, terra-cotta, and faience come at once to mind, they are in a certain sense a class by themselves, which indicates that they have never been quite admitted into the family of sculpture in the fullest sense of the term. We have records also of

statues in gold and ivory, though none remain to testify of their excellence. Nevertheless as we examine one famous gallery after another, or study sculpture in the original setting where that is possible, it is plain that porous stone, marble, granite, basalt, and bronze, either plain or gilded, are the materials to which sculpture has consecrated itself, more than to any others. We cannot call this accident, nor yet convention, since it has survived art periods of the greatest originality. Nor can we call it wholly a practical matter. Statues that must endure the assaults of wind and rain required undoubtedly a durable material. But art forms as well as other matters adapt themselves to a situation, and why should a statue erected to stand within a temple or protected shrine be made as stoutly as if it were exposed to the winds of heaven? Many statues of antiquity, and perhaps the greater number of

sculptures to-day, face the necessity of withstanding the weather as little as do pictures or books. We demand a certain amount of durability in anything, but our pictures are not painted to defy the rain; why should we ask of the sculptor that his material be hard and difficult to cut, for the sake of a durability that will never be put to the test?

It must be borne in mind that we are not presuming to say what were the conscious motives of different sculptors in using stone for their material. Artists, as a rule, are unconscious in proportion as they are successful, and their motives may have been, even to themselves, apparently guided by convention and practical considerations of all kinds. We often think that we are doing a thing for one reason, when to a dispassionate observer it is quite evident that we are doing it for another. So it is not the artist's task to formulate why he does this or that. His

results may often be happy accidents. But it is not as presumptuous as it may seem at first, for one interested in the philosophy of art to point out what were the real underlying reasons for an æsthetic choice, independently of the artist's careless account of himself. We are not, therefore, in the least assuming that we know the reason which Phidias, Praxiteles, and Michael Angelo gave to themselves for using the sculptural material that they did. If they say, or if any one says, that they did it merely from accident or convention or what you will, we can only say, as we do to any other incorrect introspection from one unused to psychological analysis, "We know better! To dissect mental states is our business, not yours, and the account of an artist's mind as it reveals itself in his work, which is his life, is far more accurate than an introspection, in which he is not trained and but scantily

interested." Towering geniuses in sculpture would not have followed a convention in material, when its reason for being was gone. That is not their way. If with other wide variations in style, great sculptors have kept to a constant uniformity in material, even though they have protested that it was quite accidental, it is obvious that there is an *inherent harmony* between their ideas and that material. If they cannot detect such a conscious demand, they are simply poor psychologists.

No doubt much of the poverty of æsthetic research arises from the fact that psychologists and philosophers attempt to theorize in an art field where they have no appreciation. But that is only half the story. The other difficulty is that artists and art-lovers, who have the appreciation, attempt introspection when they are not trained. How natural, then, that misapprehension should arise!

Our demand for stone or metal, aside from their inherent beauty, is not therefore merely because of a practical advantage, however conspicuous that advantage may be in outdoor sculpture. We must make, nevertheless, a very careful distinction between being durable, and *looking* durable. Undoubtedly the suggestion of permanence which stone carries with it is a very important part of the sculptural idea. This would be as potent a factor in indoor as in outdoor sculpture. Is it not true that the idea of ageless permanence still breathes from a battered Victory in stone, even when practical durability has obviously been found wanting?

Furthermore, some critics have suggested that just the difficulty in cutting gives the abiding charm to sculpture. We scorn the easy victory over wax or clay, and only honor a work, the enormous difficulty of which has been overcome in conflict with a resisting

medium. This supposition stands the test of reason even less than the other. A difficult technic is noble just so long as it is necessary for a result, but exploited for its own sake, it is trivial. A painter who uses inconvenient brushes from choice; a piano player who exhibits extraordinary muscular control in playing all his music with crossed hands, excites our laughter. A sculptor who chose a difficult material to show off his chiseling powers, when a softer or lighter one would serve his purpose as well, would merit the astonished interest which we give to a trickster, but not to an artist. Even the suggestion that the cost of rare stones excites our admiration falls to the ground when we remember that the rarer colored marbles have not been chosen for the finest sculpture. The more beautiful the stone in itself, the greater delight it affords us as stone, but even a duller stone is no less *sculpture*.

I am inclined to think that the quality of stone which we are all the time unconsciously demanding is not so much its durability, certainly not its difficulty in manipulation or its cost, but above all things its weight, and connected with this — its size. If the statue has too fragile a surface, it is inconvenient; if it cannot stand the weather, it must be brought indoors; if the stone is dull granite, instead of translucent marble, it is not so beautiful; if it is of a softer sandstone, the chiseler cannot be so subtle; if it is of bronze, the technic of construction is a different one. But if it dwindles in size sufficiently, and thereby in weight, it may still be beautiful, but it is not sculpture. It is a cameo, a coin, a gem, a carving, a lovely object still; but it is sculpture, strictly speaking, no longer. Size and weight are so bound up in each other that it is difficult to determine which is the more fundamental of the two. If the

statue were of required size, but of some material so light that no feeling of solidity accompanied it, we should call it a poor selection of material, and hence poor sculpture. Even though wooden statues show a high degree of beauty, and certainly have a greater ease of manipulation, they have never expressed the sculptural ideal *par excellence.* Is not this the reason? However permanent they may be from their sheltered location, they never *look* entirely so; and however great their subject-matter, the pressure of their lesser weight does not carry so profound a message. On the other hand, as a marble or a bronze dwindles in size, it does not lose its beauty, but its classification. It may be beautiful still, but in the fullest sense of the term it is not a statue. Thus we do not call coins and cameos, statuettes and figurines, sculpture, without some modification in the term. By the very diminutive endings of

the words, we imply a variation from a larger standard. How large or how small is a different question. Just as Aristotle said of tragedy, that it must be an action "of a certain magnitude," so we may say of sculpture, that other things being equal, a certain size limit is implied. Life-size is not required, for the figures of the Parthenon frieze, the Orpheus relief, and the Mourning Athena are far smaller than that. It seems, however, as if reliefs could be smaller than free-standing statues, and still remain sculpturesque. The stone or metal background of a relief gives the figures their own scale, and lessens the likelihood of comparing their size with that of neighboring objects. In addition to that, the background brings with it its weight; and I believe that we have not analyzed the experience correctly if we leave out the appeal of that quiet, heavy slab of substance, apparently so ignored. Hangings

of silk or velvet behind a free-standing statue also serve to throw the figures into relief, but they do not tell the same story. Figures of the same size as those in the Parthenon frieze, against any but their own background, would be a different matter. Thus even the tiny reliefs of coins gain size from their metal grounds, and do not so speak of smallness as do free-standing figures which are even larger.

We cannot definitely set a limit for size; and, moreover, at this point we may again come into difficulties with the archæologist. Sculpture is always governed by the same laws, no matter what its size. That which the Greeks expressed in colossal statues, they carved upon their gems. Their athletes were of the same type in marble larger than life, and in bronze three inches high. Here again our critic is perfectly right. The point of difference lies only in what we are to

call sculpture. We are analyzing what we consider to be the quintessence of the art, not what was intended to be such. In the same fashion, when we use the term "art" in general, we mean the best, the most widely accepted forms of every type, not those forms which in one way or another have failed to be the best. Now that the Greeks did not always adapt their ideas to the absolute size of the object is true, but it is their weakness and not their strength. The little gold Niké driving a chariot, which is in the Boston Art Museum, happens to be an ear-ring. Multiply it a thousand times, and modify it in no other fashion, and it would decorate appropriately a monumental arch. In fact it would decorate an arch much more satisfactorily than it would an ear; and because its idea is not suited to its size, it is not the best. The tiny reliefs, the gems, the coins that are most successful, are not

those where the same idea is expressed in the same fashion as in the larger type. That any form can be forced into any size is true; but it were better not. Our point is, then, simply that the sculptural size, the size that can express anything that any sculpture can, must be at least approximately twelve or fourteen inches high. Below this, if the subject is modified, the beauty and excellence may be as overwhelming, but it is not in its strictest sense a piece of sculpture. Or if the same idea is forced into the size, it is not so good, and hence, from our definition, not sculpture as the finest art.

All sizes may have developed together. Our interest is not, however, in what they were, or might have been, but in what they are. The tiny in sculpture strikes no sculptural note impossible to larger work. Its message is as clear, but it is different. We ordinarily take this so much for granted

that perhaps it has never occurred to us that it is simply the change in size which makes us call a relief a cameo; or a statue, a carving; and which makes our ideal demand so different. *All* are strictly carvings, and while a change of size is likely to mean a change to a more delicate material as well, it is the difference in size which really makes the difference in classification, and the difference in weight which changes our attitude from the more sculptural to that befitting the so-called *minor* arts. If a decrease in size so changes the sculptor's appeal, what about increase? Could a statue become so large that it would be a statue no longer? If not a statue, what would it be? Here we can only theorize, since even the colossal statues known to art are not so large that they have lost their sculpturesque quality. One can always reduce size by distance, so that a smaller image may be cast upon the

retina; and whereas an architectural character would presumably be present in a monumental statue, the presence of weight is so essential to the material expression of sculpture that additions do not trifle with its effect as does decrease. A certain size and solidity, then, must be immediately and obviously presented to us in the material of the essentially sculpturesque; and the two abstract terms recall to us certain definitions of substance itself. Philosophers and scientists have always been trying to define what we mean by "substance." What, if anything, is the outer world finally composed of in itself, aside from the modifications which it appears to undergo in relation to our sense organs? The ancient and mediæval thinkers made a distinction between the qualities which inhere in substance, as opposed to the qualities which it seems to have by virtue of its action on our sense organs.

Thus color, taste, smell, sound, and temperature all depend on the state of our own nervous system. To the color-blind, the grass is gray; to the fever patient, the air is hot; to the dry tongue, there is no taste—and so these sensations are illusory, and represent only the secondary qualities of substance. But the primary qualities—shape, size, and solidity—were distinguished from these as being more intimately bound up in the nature of substance itself. It was argued that, however relative a matter taste and color, for instance, might be, size and weight were so a part of matter itself that they belonged in a peculiar fashion to the structure of substance as such. Thus from the Greek Democritus, who deprived atoms of any qualities but size and weight, to the later scientific theorizers, who associated atoms with no characteristic but that of weight, there has been a greater intimacy of connec-

tion in thought between the idea of matter and the primary qualities than between it and those termed secondary, and size and weight have been regarded as the essentials to any concepts of matter. Modern scientific theory goes beyond this, and reduces atoms to something more elemental, and modern psychology will not admit that perceptions of weight and size are different in any peculiar sense from the other sense perceptions. But be that as it may, the only point in which we are interested now is that in the imagination, the customary concepts of things as they occur in any mind, these so-called primary qualities have a different mental coloring to us than do other perceptions. So an art, which shows its material aspect so obviously, the material substance of which we can recognize so easily, we should expect to awaken in us a greater sensitiveness to just those characteristics of substance, which

for whatever reason have been most intimately bound up with our very conception of it. It will be no surprise to find that wide variations in volume, and hence in weight, make more difference to us in our strictly sculpturesque feeling than the presence or absence of color, smooth or unfinished surface, greater or less detachment from the background, or even more or less fidelity to realism in the form represented. Of course, marble sculpture, even when supposedly white, appeals to us more or less by color. It is a cream white, or a veined white, or a translucent white; or, in the case of other stones and metals, it may be gray, green, brown, red, or almost any shade in plain colors or varied tints intermixed. There is evidence that the Greek sculptors of the early and even the classic period went beyond this in often painting their marble in broad saturated colors. Whatever the color

variation, nevertheless, however we like or dislike these changes, sculpture stays sculpture for us, in a way it does not when wide variations are made in size. Green bronze and gold trimmings make a statue no more and no less than the whitest or blackest of marble. But how great a difference in our point of view toward a colossal Apollo and a figure two inches high, however similar the color may be, and however the outline and beauty of both may approach each other! As we have already said in this connection, it is not a question of difference in beauty, but in classification.

So much, then, for the material in which our sculptural idea must find expression. Is there also a limitation in the sculptural ideas that can be expressed, or can any idea find appropriate exploitation in the materials we have discovered to be the essential medium?

The statues we have studied in our tour of

the gallery have been almost exclusively representations of human and animal forms. Conspicuously infrequent have been figures of the dead, and nowhere have we found, as we find, for instance, in painting, isolated subjects from still life. In reliefs, especially low reliefs which approach drawing, we have seen representation of inanimate things in the background. But as the relief becomes higher, they disappear, and in free-standing statues they have practically ceased to exist in any other capacity than as ornament or support for the living figures. Inanimate things as statues by themselves we have not found at all. Thus we have no free-standing statue of a tree or of a flower by itself, of a hillside or of a seashore. There are no interiors in the round, with rich furniture or household objects, which make such charming subjects for painting or poetry. And yet, why could not sculpture, which has of all the arts

a tangible medium in which to work, express material things more suitably than other arts, where the translation must be more complete? Here, of course, we observe that a stone chair is a chair and not the statue of a chair, no matter how much the grain of another substance, like wood, be imitated. A statue of a table is a table; a statue of a vase is a vase — and, therefore, so far as this kind of work is concerned, we have no representation of another idea, but another construction of the subject itself. Its art value must then depend on the beauty of its decoration and its proportion — not at all on the faithfulness with which it has caught the spirit of its model. This, however, does not dispose of flowers, fruit, and vegetables as sculptural subjects. A statue of a palm tree is no more a tree than is a painting of one, and yet we have never seen such a thing. In sculptural relief we see the loveliest fruit and flower decoration possible.

The relief may even be very high, in the decoration of capitals of columns and other architectural work. But where a painter goes beyond this, and devotes a complete art work to a vase of flowers, or to a table covered with still-life objects, we feel that such a sculptural free-standing group would be a monstrosity — so much so in fact that it has never crossed a sculptor's mind to try it! It cannot be all a matter of absence of color in sculpture which makes this difference, for nothing need have prevented artists from coloring such still-life studies. But apparently the subject-matter of any piece of independent sculpture must be a living form, or one strongly suggesting the life that has just left it; and far from being more adapted to express the material side of nature *because* of its heavy material, it more than any art must express *life*, or the idea as far as possible removed from stone.

Let a poet or a musician, who deals in a more spiritual medium, take for his subject, if he will, a tree, a mountain, or a crumbling wall. But the sculptor who is handling a block of stone must fashion from it a living and breathing form. Art is a translation of an idea into a substance, and just in so far as the substance is a heavy one, the idea must be vital enough to vivify it throughout its mass.

But here one more restriction is necessary. Shall we argue from this that if living forms must animate our stone, they must be as living as possible? Shall they always dance and sing, shall their expression be of the liveliest, and their draperies of the lightest, to counteract the material out of which they are struggling? Here our taste and our observation rebel. The greatest statues are quiet. The drapery, if there is such, falls as a rule in dignified folds. No attempt is made to force

the stone to be anything but stone — or, in other words, the heavy substance, although it is vivified, is not contradicted. The idea, when well chosen, exhibits just enough of liveliness to spiritualize its mass, without quarreling with it.

We are impressed with the fact that Sculpture is more than any other art the expression of restraint. It must avoid this and that material, and be strict as to the size which it chooses for its idea. It cannot represent this inanimate subject nor that too brisk idea — but above all, as it is the most classic art, it must look carefully to the most perfect harmony of idea with subject, and show extraordinary strictness in the things it does *not* do.

What, then, are the ideas which are suitable for Sculpture, after finding so many that are not? Are we not forced to an unbearable monotony, if our subjects must be

chosen from the ranks of living forms, at ease with themselves? In a picture gallery, were subject after subject to show as little variation as is indicated in a sculpture catalogue, we should rebel. But here, strangely enough, we do not rebel in the least, and since the ordinary monotonies do not obtain, we shall be forced to investigate the meaning of the word. We call any group of people monotonous when each member of the company talks, dresses, and acts like every other. We are fatigued in any circle where the opinions, the habits, and the standards of all its members are a foregone conclusion, and we sigh for a difference,—for a shock if necessary,—to reinforce ourselves with the variety of living. With all this, there exist certain constant similarities, any trifling with which gives an abnormality and not a gratifying change. We do not complain, as did Humpty Dumpty in

"Through the Looking Glass," that more people have not been made distinctive by having two eyes on the same side of their nose! We do not ask that social monotony be varied by walking on hands instead of feet, or painting our faces the color of jade. We demand individual variation within a constancy of type. Therefore it is tiresome to reiterate the same remarks, but not to consort always with vertebrates; because conversation is an individual matter and should be varied, and backbones are typical matters and should be as uniformly regular as possible. Now, it is wholly a matter of the point of view whether you fasten your attention on the individual or on the typical aspect of any matter. Both sides of the question must be always present to a certain extent, but the emphasis is different. That is, every art object is an individual existence, no matter how typical in conception; and

just as truly all art which is truly great points beyond the fleeting individual emotion to the type of which it is a part. Nevertheless the emphasis varies greatly, and sculpture, in its essence, is the art expressive of typical values. After all that we have said that it does *not* do, at last we affirm positively that which it *does*. The figures of sculpture are not engaged in so-called significant actions, because those are individual matters. Your traveling, or singing, or banking, or teaching are the pursuits which represent the more important aspects of life to you as individuals. But the statues, as we noticed at the beginning, are standing, sitting, leaning, watching, holding, playing, living, or perhaps dying, in a fashion as far as possible removed from individual application, but which expresses, if we catch its message, the absolute dignity of life as such. Man himself is more than anything he does. Our

separate actions are, after all, two thirds fussiness, and the superb dignity of these sculptured maidens who clasp a belt or bind a sandal, the repose of those serene athletes who stand or bend so easily, and who refuse to commit themselves to more, is an eternal proud assertion that life itself, not its pursuits, is the greatest reality. There is a magnificence in this high simplicity which is in some respects more touching than the most individually impassioned lyric. If we apologize for anything, let it be for our lacks or abnormalities, not for the splendid vital postures and movements which unite us with the race. We are both individuals and members of a type — the emphasis is ours to make, and thus has sculpture chosen. Could any material so express our bond with nature and with each other as blocks of the earth from which we sprung?

All that we have said does not in the least

prevent sculpture from being an art in which portraiture is possible, and portraiture of the highest order. But just as any great portrait, in whatever material, gives through the individual features the universal type of which it is the expression, so sculpture does it even more. There is, in the very weight of its stone, a suggestion of the pressure of that human family for which one man has been chosen to be the symbol. One must come away from any sculptural display with a sense of the magnificence of the human heritage strong upon him, and it is the nicely adjusted harmony of the idea with the substance which brings this result to pass.

We cannot have failed to notice in our tour through the gallery of sculpture that a head, a torso, a bit of decoration even, is treated with a curious respect. In fact, sculpture, in spite of the apparent durability of material, is likely to be, more than any other

art, in a fragmentary condition. We are little disturbed, or at least not too much shocked, by the battered condition of a large part of classic sculpture, to find in it a splendid beauty notwithstanding. Is there no limit to the expressiveness of a stone? A man's head, his foot, his trunk are but mutilated parts of his whole body; but a head in sculpture is not a mutilation, but a complete thing. In coins, a head more often than not is chosen as complete design, and evokes no impression of fragmentariness. Moreover, although other isolated parts of the body are seldom chosen for separate treatment, if time and hard usage have unhappily destroyed the rest of the figure, we can treat such a fragment as if it were a whole. We forget the absence of the legs of the Hermes, and of the heads of the figures on the Parthenon pediment. We regret their loss, as we should regret the loss of any great art work, but their absence does

not vitiate the appeal of what remains. Any part of the body which can enough express the meaning of the whole to give a fair idea of what the rest would be, can be called a sufficiently complete expression of a living value to stand as an art work on its own merits. Thus the face without the nose, or without the cranium; the torso without the limbs, or the head without the torso, can all express a complete living value, which a nose without a face or an arm without a hand cannot do. Without a sufficient admixture of life, and living lines in the material, the stone has turned to stone again.

Is there any possibility of summarizing this discussion? We have tried to understand a little of the sculptural demand which underlies the matter and the idea of this art, which represents as perhaps no other does an age-long human experience. No definition can expound its essence, and no for-

mula can bind it. Yet for the sake of a clear, even if imperfect parting concept, let us try to gather up the loose ends and epitomize our results. We have limited the substance in which sculpture may fittingly be expressed; we have limited the ideas, the action, the emotion which is fitting to the substance, and we have pointed out the bond, and the gulf, by which sculpture is respectively united with and separated from the nature which is her model. Let us conclude then by a formulation of our results: —

Sculpture is the representation of a certain magnitude, in stone or other heavy material, of a complete expression of a living form; where the idea harmonizes with the material, by expressing no action or passion that is uncontrolled, but where, through a simple and universal bodily attitude, the grandeur of the life of the type is represented.

# II

# THE MINOR ARTS

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PERHAPS there is no more paradoxical situation in the vocabulary of art than this: that a public which can passionately admire the minor arts cannot give them a better name! To label them as "minor" calls forth a protest from those who find in this field of art a nearer approach to perfection than in any other. "Industrial" art is surely a misnomer, for many objects which fall within this classification are no more industrially useful than others which enjoy unquestioned rank among the fine arts. "Decorative" art is hardly more satisfactory, since so much painting and sculpture of the best periods is decorative.

The nomenclature is certainly faulty, and

yet there is, I believe, a certain justification for the name we have chosen as our title, against which we cannot rebel if we understand it fully.

What are the minor arts? We find under this heading such diverse products as wood-carving and terra-cottas, coins and mosaics, glass- and metal-work, carved ivory and jewelry, bookbinding, pottery and textiles, and the question naturally arises, "What is there in common among such a variety of materials and forms?" Surely a coin bears no more resemblance to an embroidered scarf or a carved desk than does a picture to a statue — not so much, in fact; and yet, according to some broad distinction, they are all grouped together. To limit the field of sculpture is comparatively easy, since there is an almost complete uniformity in the materials of stone and metal. But in the minor arts obviously no one substance can be the

binding tie between products of brass and of leather, clay and silk; so we must look for some kinship in the ideas represented. Here again our search is unrewarded, for now it is a Christ in ivory, and now a lily-like bowl in glass; here a bull delicately chased on a gold cup, and there a palmette on a shawl. We find an impartial interest in natural and geometric forms, which is no more exclusively common to this group of arts than it is to painting or sculpture. In fact the satisfaction of the minor artist (since we must use the term) in his work is apparently shared by the painter, for the latter delights in painting the rich objects which the former has already fashioned. Is it not a paradox to label as "lesser" the artist who produces the brocades and gold ornament, the furniture and gems, with which the painter decks his model, and which he is at so much pains to reproduce?

However this may be, we must apparently look beyond conformity in material, or in the objects chosen for representation, for a satisfactory reason why all these diverse beautiful objects should be thought of as related. We can detect no common demand of color, size, or weight, for these arts range from the tiny to the massive, with every conceivable variety of surface, solidity, form, and finish, according to the material of which they are made and the place they are to fill. The reason sometimes given for their common grouping is that they are, despite their wide difference, alike in the respect that they serve a practical purpose. They are subservient to use, and because of this harnessing to the ordinary pursuits of life, they cannot be placed in the proud circle of the arts which exist for their own sake, aside from practical issues. While there is undoubtedly a large measure of

truth in this distinction, it would seem as if we were not wholly conscious of a tendency to unfairness in our comparisons. We are likely to put side by side in our imaginations the finest of painting or sculpture with the mediocre in the industrial arts, where the subserviency of beauty to use, in the latter, is unduly obvious. Let us rather compare the best of Greek sculpture with the best Greek coins and vases; the best Italian painting with finest jewelry and tapestries of the period, and at once the distinction loses its obvious character. It is true that the vases were made for wine, and the coins for currency, but so, on the other hand, were the paintings made to decorate walls, and many of the statues were for votive offerings. Now, neither statues, vases, nor coins perform their function, but they all retain their importance. When they stand in the trying isolation of an art gallery, the minor

arts tell their story articulately with no help from a former industrial value. It is undoubtedly true that the frescoes upon the wall are every bit as useful to their owner as are the crown jewels to the king, when at long intervals he places them upon his head. One art product decorates one thing, and one another; why then charge the second with an industrial purpose, when we do not so charge the first? Here it is possible to make a distinction. Granted that any art object *may* be used for some practical purpose if it is forced to be so used; the minor arts are deliberately fashioned with such a purpose in view, and any divorcement from their intended function is wholly artificial. The removal of the industrial art object to an art gallery amounts only, we might say, to an admission that we are too busy or too poor to afford such things for daily handling. On the other hand, there is no such artificiality

in the painting wrenched from the wall it was made to decorate. A wall is a wall, no matter where. To decorate it is but a shadow of usefulness in any case. Therefore, the sacrifice in a changed setting in the latter case is a negligible quantity. But the place for coins is in a wallet, or slipping through one's fingers; the place for glass and pottery is on a well-decked table, with milk and honey glimmering within. If not where they were meant to be, we lose the piquancy of their workmanship, whereas a painting or a statue need be only where it has a good light and a fair approach.

It will be admitted, however, that there is a very wide variation in such practical utility. Some industrial arts are undoubtedly very useful in gaining a livelihood for others besides the artist who makes them, while others are as vaguely usable as the most disinterested major arts could be.

Why is the richly ornamented frame of an altar-piece any more *practical* than the painting within? The frame is needed for the picture, but so is the picture for the frame. Both are lovely objects. Both serve the purpose of decorating a shrine. Both are sufficiently good to retain their merit if transferred to another setting; and whereas, for other reasons, we are justified in calling the painting as much more important as we like, it would hardly seem that the basis of distinction were practical, industrial usefulness.

Another thing has been very evident in a mere naming of the industrial arts. There is no abstraction in their titles as there has come to be in the so-called fine arts. Instead of "sculpture" and "painting" of *something*, with a vagueness as to what, and the still further indefinite character of the terms "literature" and "music," we have a brisk

concreteness in the material of the art — wood, metal, glass, clay — which indicates at once that here is the centre of our interest. The other arts must have material expression no less than these, but they have not considered the material of such paramount importance that it must be named as the essence of their whole work. Thus a minor artist may be frankly a gem-cutter; while a sculptor does not perhaps recognize himself at once as a stone-cutter. At any rate, whatever his own fondness for his material, the rest of the world does not call him such, and here we have struck one important note of difference.

Vocabulary is after all a sensitive indicator of thought — or at least of the absence of it. If minor artists have never separated their work from their material enough even to name the art which they pursue, the chances are that the substance which they

handle remains a factor in their imagination of supreme importance. A name may be given to their products in terms of the use to which they will be subjected: as, furniture or bookbinding; or in terms of the material of which they are made: as, gems, brasses, blown glass, or terra-cotta. But there is apparently no way to indicate such an abstraction as that of painting and sculpture, where the process and the material have grown together in the connotation of the term; as that of literature, with its reference to dealing in "letters"; architecture to building; and music, denoting by its name only an art watched over and inspired by the muses.

If the industrial artists had so looked upon their art that the idea or activity which it embodied took rank above the particular material of which it was fashioned, such a point of view would have become crystallized in language.

To admit, then, an especial emphasis in thought upon the material which passes through the workman's hands is the first step toward penetrating to the principle involved. This in no way indicates inferiority, but simply a difference in the manner of approach. All artists must feel the utmost sensitiveness to the subtle appeal of the substance which they handle, and to feel it more acutely is of itself no indication of a materialistic mind, but rather of more delicate susceptibility.

It seems as if the nations that took substance more seriously were rewarded by a skill in its invention and manipulation, that we of the Occident, who feel more sharply the cleavage between mind and matter, spirit and body, could never have. A philosophy, for instance, with a settled conviction that God is in everything, for "when me they fly, I am the wings," does not share in our dis-

tinction between creator and created things. Whether causally connected with this or not, the inventions of the East display a genius for detecting the possibilities of mere matter which we do not share. Take, for instance, textiles, where the *idea* represented is perhaps as difficult to separate from the material as in any of the industrial arts. There may be pictorial representation in the weaving, or there may be simply the dumb beauty of texture and surface and color, but by their very names our more beautiful textiles are branded with their Eastern origin: Pongee and rajah, crêpes and cashmeres, Persian carpets, India mulls, scarfs from Egypt, and chuddahs from India. What invention in textiles has the Western world, with its greater development in literature and music, to offer in comparison? It cannot invent a beautiful substance because it does not understand it, and in its heart despises even

while it admires. A man's or a nation's philosophy is the most important thing about them, and until both honor substance, and see the *idea* of material power behind its actuality, neither man nor nation will ever become preëminent in the minor arts.

So much, then, for the materials of these arts — as wide a range as there are beautiful substances to be found or fashioned.

What is the artist to do with his material when he finds it? He must not only exploit its own beauties, but, as in the other arts, he must there embody some idea which by its harmony with the substance lives in it in a way that makes all observers feel that here is its inevitable setting. If we look through the industrial arts, we find the range of ideas expressed in them as wide almost as the materials.

Moreover, as the list of subjects indicates, there is a strong suggestion with each of

these art objects that something is to be *done* with it. It may be as distinctly useful an action as clothing the person, or as remotely practical as slipping a ring on the finger, or hanging a rug on the wall. But its position is always relative. To be seen to the best advantage, there is an appropriateness about its being seen in one place rather than another; on a table or in a window, around the neck or on the floor; and despite the fact that good industrial art *can* stand alone, only in the place for which it was designed can we get its full charm.

Perhaps nothing will illustrate so clearly this range of subject-matter as to contrast it with the subjects common to sculpture. There we find man in his essential aspects, not man in his diverse activities; man in his universal nature which we all share, not in his occupations in which no two of us are alike.

Here seemingly we have just the reverse. We are not now interested in what man *is*, so much as in the innumerable things which he *does;* the things he handles, and reads, and eats from, and sits upon, and looks out of, and kneels upon, and laughs at, and hunts with, and in which he arrays himself, his family and his house.

Just what sculpture never does, the minor arts do. They embody the ideas of man's infinite activities. They illustrate for us the habits of a people as nothing else could possibly do.

But are we not here involved in a contradiction? We decided earlier in our discussion that it was not in point to give as the distinguishing mark of the minor arts that they were practically useful, for many of them are not so. Here, on the other hand, we seem to be saying that it is their embodiment of the idea of man's activities that gives them

their distinctive classification. Is it not the same thing? If these arts mirror an artist's attention as centred upon human activities, and if he suggests them in art forms which may enable a man to live them out, is not that the same thing as to call them practically useful?

Here, however, an important distinction must be made.

We have granted already that the minor arts bear a special relation to the place they were intended to occupy. They demand, by their very form, that the activity which they suggest be carried out. But that is very different from practical usefulness. That a stained-glass window cries out to have the light shine through its vivid panes; that a heavy ring implores to be handled; and that a rich shawl sighs for its breadth to be gathered into folds and its colors reflected on itself, seems as far removed from bread-and-

butter pursuits as for a poem to prefer articulation by a good voice to distortion by a cracked one.

What do we mean by usefulness when we watch the color of tea in a porcelain cup or fondle a leathern volume with illuminated pages? If all we cared to do was to drink the tea or look out of the window or read the book, then why go to the trouble of making the porcelain, the glass, and the leather beautiful?

To accomplish an action and get through with it is all that most of us care for, and the arts of our country show it. In reality the lovely binding embodies the *idea* of reading, the cup is the quintessence of tea-drinking, the window stands for the spirit of " windowness " — aside from the fact of whether we wish to use it to improve the ventilation or not.

Paradoxical as it may sound, these arts,

instead of standing for practical issues, stand for exactly the reverse! This beautification of the daily tools of living is not a practical matter, practical in the sense of ministering thereby to our bodily life, but it is a purely ideal one. In so far as the ordinary tools are lovely, we for ever so slight an instant forget to use them, and look at them instead. We are not content that a really beautiful necklace be always unseen by ourselves upon our own necks, but we let it slip through our fingers endlessly to watch the lights therein — and then omit to wear it. Instead of thumping impatiently on the wrought bronze knocker for an answer, we are beguiled by its beauty into forgetting our errand. A carven chair demands at least another chair for one to sit in while he gazes at the richness of the first, and who does not pause before stepping upon a beautiful rug and hesitate to subject it to so mean a purpose?

For practical drinking, give us a stout mug that will not break, and that will keep its heat or cold, not a delicate shell that brooks no rough treatment and whose transparency distracts our thirst. For practical currency give us mediocre bits of metal, where our satisfaction in the handling is wholly relative to the mint value, and whose beauty of design will never tempt us to expose it when it is not in use. Surely to keep out the light, there are many materials more substantial than lace or embroidery, and who can look in or out of a stained-glass window?

It is obvious that these objects are far from practical in the sense of making more successful the pursuits to which they are dedicated. Human attention is a rigorously limited affair, and when it is directed to the graving on a knife or fork, it cannot so devote itself to wielding them. When it is lost in the contemplation of the enamel on a

buckle, the clasp remains unfastened, and wheels of industry go round again only when the representative idea of buckling and eating and sitting at a table has been forgotten, and the actual operation has begun.

Thus it is that the minor arts make for a slower, *less* practical life. They put the brakes on restless transactions which are concerned only with ends to be gained for the advantage of the doer, and by giving him pause as he fingers each tool in the process, the idealism of the manifold interests of life comes home to him. He forgets the bargain and the hunt, which are after all relative matters and must soon be done again, and instead he loses himself, for ever so short a time, in the *idea* of the pursuit, its infinite human interest, and therewith the activity becomes not relative but eternal. The materialism of any age begins, not when men are held periodically in the spell of the

grandeur which is typified by their tools, but when they are deluded into thinking that the tools are nothing, and that some material result of the process is the reason for it all.

To regard a dinner as solely a matter of food and the disposing of it is the practical point of view. To look upon the shapes of the dishes and their texture as symbols of the kinds of substance that are placed within, and as indicating the physical laws which govern the way they must be served and eaten, puts an idealistic touch on a necessary occupation and makes acceptable a less redundant repast.

With such a range of exquisite materials, and such an abundance of ideas to express, how could it ever happen that these arts were labeled minor? There is no less skill in making, and no less time required to bring such art objects to perfection. It may take

longer to build a cathedral or paint a fresco than to fashion a goblet; but, on the other hand, the goblet may be longer in the making than a poem or a melody. Art is long in any case, and any attempt to measure the preëminence of an art by such a time-scale would be certain to end in ineffectual distinctions. We cannot say there is less beauty in the minor arts; indeed, there is often a perfection about a coin or a bit of embroidery that more imposing work, by the very ambition of its attempt, finds impossible to reveal.

Yet, despite all this, I believe that the distinction between the major and the minor arts is based upon a vital and universal difference in emotional approach, and that it is of this difference that we are inarticulately aware when we pass from one type of art to the other, and vaguely feel that the atmosphere has changed. I believe that this differ-

ence of attitude is indicated very clearly in the facial expression of a company which passes from the contemplation of painting and sculpture to a collection of gems, textiles, or porcelains. They come from the one elated but serious, chastened somewhat by its grandeur and quiet. To use Aristotle's term there has been a *katharsis* of the mind through the weight of sublime things, but as soon as the scene has changed and they are faced with the products of the industrial artist, they shift from an attitude of awe to one of unmixed delight.

There is no less respect for the skill of the artist or for the value of his work; but his message is always joyous, full of abundant life. Such pleasure is contagious. The spectator literally smiles as he fingers the smooth carving or the sinuous links of a gold chain. Moreover, he longs to handle them, almost to play with them—faintly echoing by this

very desire that pleasure with which the craftsman gave the burnished surface in the beginning, and toyed with his work before it left his hands. This pleasure in physical contact with the minor arts is the natural impulse to handle any delightful form, an impulse which in the major arts is only counteracted by our reverence for the dignity of the idea conveyed.

With the minor arts, on the contrary, our delight is without admixture of awe. Our respect is no less. It may in certain cases be more. But just as the most devoted subject in the realm might feel an impulse to pat the cheek of the royal baby whom he adored, whereas he would only bow before the king, so we may love the minor arts as much as we will and marvel at their perfection, but however we love them, we are not afraid of them! They speak to us only of joy, and joy unmixed with other emotions cannot

stay our hand. Just here, I believe, is the province of the minor artist and his limitation. No art sings so exclusively of happiness and delight in living as does this which deals in the fashioning from exquisite materials the typical tools of the life of humanity. Living, as we do, in a country where the craftsman is never seen at work, we lose sight of this prime factor of his creative impulse. But what could be more cheerful than the shop of an Italian gold or silversmith, a gem-cutter, a wood-carver, or (the economic conditions being satisfactory) of a lace-maker? If they in ever so slight a degree have caught the spirit of the real artist, it is their joy which they put into their work. No heavy brows, such as we have by common consent relegated to the dramatic author, no brimming eyes, such as the lyric poet describes so feelingly; no grasping for intangible visions, none of the melancholy of the Medici

tombs. But everywhere is a delight in things as they are, an infectious gayety which does not moralize, but catches the light in a thousand colors and shapes, and brings a smile to any face which does not hide a soul too abstracted to note its compelling joy. Just here is the abiding charm of the minor arts. They ask no questions of fate, and we are asked to face nothing but beauty and vibrant life. And yet, because these arts not only do not express sorrow and struggle, disappointment and agony, but because they *cannot*, we turn from them as from fairies or archangels and say that they are less than men.

If the criterion of any art is its perfection in attaining that which it set out to do, these minor arts would not be less, but perhaps would take a higher place than those where the struggle to express the mixed glooms and triumphs of life has left a less finished whole.

But if breadth of possible subject is our standard, the industrial arts have chosen the sunny side of existence, and have thereby forfeited their share in the representation of life as a complex of light and shadow. I cannot think of any circumstance which so epitomizes this spirit of the minor arts as the placing of the bust of Benvenuto Cellini, like a tutelar deity, to crown the arches of the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. Across that bridge stretches on either hand the line of cheerful little shops filled with gems of varying values, but of uniform brilliancy — from the most sumptuous pearls to the humblest turquoise — and brisk gold- and silversmiths are fashioning jewelry from them with untiring joy. Over the bridge, with its constant stream of jewel-seekers, presides the rollicking, the sanguine, the truculent, the self-satisfied but beauty-loving Benvenuto, who turned with equal readiness and enthusiasm

to knifing an adversary or graving the Lord Almighty on a button! Possibly Benvenuto was not as perfect in his art as he confidently supposed, but at any rate a great eminence was possible for him, and a man of his temper was thought worthy of mention as a master craftsman, without that admixture of solemnity which appears in the finer examples of the more serious arts. Could such a man dominate music or poetry or sculpture, even for a period of time, as Cellini has dominated the Italian jewelers and craftsmen for centuries? As is the master so is the disciple. Contrast Benvenuto's attitude toward life with the bearing of passion tempered with melancholy which devotees of certain fine arts adopt! However conventional this manner may have become, even a convention springs from some root, and has a certain meaning.

If we grant the truth of this observation,

the questions still remain, Why is it true? What is there in the nature of the industrial arts with their beauty of material, their manifold expression of man's interests and their feeling for perfection, which prevents them from being the avenues for the most sombre, sublime, or prophetic ideas that might inhabit an artist's mind?

Perhaps it is not too much to say that the two characteristics of the minor arts which have been emphasized, the unlimited interest in substances and the presentation through these substances of the ideas of man's infinite activities — just those characteristics which are the rich field of the arts in question — are, by the very structure of human nature, their limits. It is the material world which brings sorrow; it does not alleviate it. Whatever may be the cause of gloom — death, the fear of it, obstructed plans, disease, poverty, solitude, renunciation — all these experiences

come from the clash of material mechanical laws with spiritual demands. Every one of them means a tyrannical check imposed on a too desirous soul, and why should such a soul fly to more matter, even though it be lovely, when the inner brutality of things is tormenting the artist?

The major arts depend also upon material. They show no less sensitiveness to its beauty or brutality, but they *limit* their range of material. Moreover, they may oppose to it their idea, so that the whole story — the opposition, the struggle, and the victory of one or the other — may be expressed, and the substance does not remain supreme.

Again we ask the same question: "Why cannot the industrial arts do the same?" Because, as we have found, the ideas relegated to these arts are all strongly suggestive of man's activity, and men in grief are not interested in action.

The attitudes of a sorrowful man are not drawing soft garments through his fingers, toying with gems, eating and drinking from gold and crystal, hunting with inlaid muskets, or handling rich volumes. Since these activities are absent, his thoughts and the thoughts of the fashioners of these objects are absent too, and in such an atmosphere of sadness, I venture to say that the minor arts would neither be made nor noticed.

It is a fact of elementary psychology that joy or agreeable mental states of any kind have a tendency to send the blood to the surface, to quicken the breath, and to increase the muscular energy. All these bodily changes can be observed in even the slight changes of agreeable stimuli possible in a psychological laboratory. How much more are they marked in the real satisfactions of life outside a laboratory!

On the contrary, the disagreeable mental

states tend to deepen the breath and to decrease the muscular strength and the disposition toward expansive movement. Granting this lowering of bodily activity and tone under the influence of unpleasant stimuli, what would be the natural result? Inaction, quiet, contemplation, repression, but never the varied movements which every one of the minor arts suggests.

A man in sorrow can sit motionless and get the full force of the greatest of the fine arts without adopting an attitude in opposition to his mood. His sorrow may be alleviated without being contradicted.

The same man, on the other hand, cannot sympathize with the industrial arts without facing the constant suggestion of human action represented as the supreme interest of life. But material at ease with itself and buoyant activity are antagonistic to his mood, and he turns from them and calls the arts

devoted to them "minor," because in his greatest distress they do not and cannot sympathize.

Thus we can fancy the joyful human being as equally delighting in his pictures, his statues, and his jewels, his dance music, his lyric poetry, and his rugs. But his mood changes to despair, and the major arts instantly change with him. His sculpture and architecture remind him of the abiding elements of humanity which survive all shocks. He sees the ravages of similar distress in portraits and crucifixions. His poetry responds to a melancholy note even more quickly than to joy. Not only a poem of sadness, but the same blithe lyric that he read before can change its emphasis by a slower cadence or a different tone, and his dance music can become a dirge if he chooses and be all the more sombre by its contrast with a dead gayety.

But how about his jewels, his burnished metals, and his rugs? They do not lose one brilliant color or reveal one hint of understanding of any mood but their own. One cannot dampen their suggested activity. There they are, with no dark past, and absolutely contradictory in every suggestion to any mood but joy.

If the contemplator feels no obligation to his grief, nothing could divert him so quickly. But if he nurses his sombre view of life, and believes his grief too sacred to relinquish, he ignores these unsympathetic arts until his mood has changed, and calls them "minor" only because they are less in range than his whole self.

# III

# PAINTING

## III

## PAINTING

If we are to analyze the art of painting by the same methods that we employed in the arts of sculpture and the minor arts, we are embarrassed at the start by an apparent change in the constitution of our subject-matter. We find the measuring-rod which has served us easily is now attempting a task which it cannot so well perform.

Our first question is to be as before, "Of what material is our art constructed?" and we are placed at the threshold of a picture gallery and told to wander through it and to answer the question for ourselves.

There are on the walls many canvases and panels in wooden and gilded frames, with paint applied in various manners. Some-

times we see pictures in colored chalks and again the wall itself is decorated, the plaster itself serving as a ground, or in some cases the canvas is laid upon the plaster.

Turning from the material used to the forms which are represented, we can detect no uniformity in subject-matter, for every possible object seems to be represented, from the simplest portrait to the most complex grouping in landscape or interior. The inevitable answer to our first question, "What is the material medium of the art?" must be, "canvas, paper, paint, oil, chalk." But this answer has a strange sound, as if it were a summary of the materials of the art in only the most formal sense. To say that stone and bronze are the materials of sculpture, that gold and jewels are the substances of the jeweler's art comes as no shock to the dignity of these arts. But when we do the analogous thing in the art of painting, the

tendency is to protest at once, "Not oils or pigments on paper or plaster, but the forms and colors of these pigments. The material itself, save in its technical side, is of no importance." What right have we, however, to make any such distinction in painting? Of course it is the color of these materials in which we are interested, but so it is the color and the outline of the gold and gems that delight us in jewel-work, and the color, outline, and surface of the marble which satisfy us in sculpture. Why should we, then, be forced to give the abstraction of color as painting's material expression, when we do not say of sculpture, architecture, or the minor arts, as we well might, that their materials are colors, lights, shadows, or surfaces? Why cannot we state frankly that, as the material of cathedral architecture is stone, metal, and glass, so a fresco is built of plaster and pigment; and why is not our statement as

satisfactory? That it is *not* as satisfactory I believe we shall agree, but we must inquire more closely to find what change has taken place. Why must we become less objective in a discussion of painting, and substitute for the term *substance*, the *sensations* of color and light to which that substance gives rise?

We cannot for an instant believe that certain arts have a material element and that others present an idea with no dependence on a material medium. But it is obvious that the arts of sculpture and architecture represent not only an idea which in some way peculiarly harmonizes with the medium in which it lives, but they also exhibit the spirit of the substance itself; whereas in the arts of painting, literature, and music, this is far less true.

Thus a statue of a nude boy in marble or bronze represents not only the possibilities

of vigorous boyhood, but the poetry of stone and metal. Even though the stone is primarily for the purpose of exhibiting the enduring spirit of eternal youth, the figure is also to some extent a vehicle for exploiting the vitality of stone and metal. The human figure is thus not the only speaker, but there is a duet of organic with the inorganic, in which the less articulate stone is by no means unheard.

The same is true in architecture, where the ponderous battlement tells a story even in ruins; where size, and weight, and thrusts — even lacking in structural plan — can make an architectural appeal. Surely the material of the minor arts can make this harmonious but independent impression. Their materials are often beautiful without formal arrangement.

But when we approach painting as a fine art, it may be questioned whether paint as

paint, canvas as canvas, plaster as plaster, makes any appeal whatever.

The canvas and the paint must be present to support the picture, as the bolts may reinforce masonry, but the effect of the painting has been independent of its material medium in this sense. It does not combine within itself a double message. An altar piece does not interpret the spirit of the saints and the spirit of paint. We do not face the unhewn block and tubes of pigment with the same emotion. With the block of stone and the sculptor's model we have two spirits to harmonize, two voices each chanting of its own essence. With the palette and the painter's model, be he the same model in the two cases, a change has taken place in our attitude toward the situation. We have not two spirits, but only one. The paint and canvas are wholly servants to the model. The canvas is too humble to sing

of canvas, and the paint has no message to impart of its own inner self. Therefore, we can see that, while painting is no less dependent on her material than the arts of sculpture and architecture, she is less dependent on the *spirit* of her material or upon the message of her substance. She loses and gains by this difference in appeal. She loses that grandeur in which a material force, met face to face, will always clothe itself, but curiously enough she gains a paradoxical advantage by this change from a substance-idea duet to a purely ideal solo! Since she does not and cannot give us a message from matter itself, she can *represent* it. Since paint and chalk and paper and plaster have so modestly withdrawn their own individualities from the art product that as substance they can be ignored, at once by a strange shift it becomes possible for paint to paint itself; that is, to paint, if it will, a table

covered with paints, or to paint a representative of *any* material substance which it chooses, while sculpture, being the art of inorganic substance, can never represent inorganic things independently, but only that which is the furthest removed from the inorganic that is, the living form.

It is a curious compensation of the arts. Express the spirit of material substance by presenting it, and you sacrifice the possibility of expressing it by representation. Or, on the other hand, suppress the presentation of material in the raw, and you may represent it as much as you please. It is not a piece of landscape from which a landscape may be hewn; not a boulder in which the spirit of rocks may be expressed. But colored substances, made from one cares not what, can represent the landscape and the cliff, and material form without life becomes subject for art only in a material which has ceased, so

far as in it lies, to have a life of its own at all.

For this reason we slip unconsciously into the convention of calling color, and not the colored substance, the material of painting. We schematize our visual sensations according to their hue, their value, and their saturation, just as we formalize color schemes in a laboratory. We abstract their color quality from all their other sensory characteristics, and have thereby, as it were, already idealized our material before we have begun to use it. Our material medium is thus becoming, not less important in technic, but more subordinate in significance. Our paintings may shift from wood or plaster to canvas, without serious change, in a manner quite impossible to imagine in sculpture. Moreover, the absolute size, which makes such a difference in sculpture and architecture, does not figure as significantly in painting. Size again, as well as

weight, are distinctly substantial concerns. Matter is expressing its own essence when it impresses us by its rigidity, its size, its weight, and pressure, and the fact that we classify statues quite defensibly as figurines, at an absolute size where a painting has by no means become a miniature, shows that we are not as sensitive to this factor in the art of painting. Of course, in a general sense, there must be a relation in the size of any art objects to the size of human beings, or to the size, more especially, of the picture which any object at a visible distance throws upon the human retina. But in painting, the figures may be large, as in a Michael Angelo fresco, or small, as in a Mantegna easel picture; heavy, as in painted plaster, or light, as in painted wood; huge in immediate foreground, or tiny on the horizon; and we think little of it. We begin to note a change of size only when the whole work approaches the cameo size of minia-

tures. Because we do not concern ourselves with size until so great a divergence from life has taken place, we have proved ourselves relatively indifferent to the spatial demands of substance.

Apparently, then, it is not so pertinent to inquire how large, how heavy, how small, or how light our painted art objects must, or may, be made. By passing beyond these demands, we have gained a freedom of representation so great that at first it may seem unlimited. We have found that we may not carve landscapes, but we may paint them; we cannot make statues of interiors, but we may make pictures of them; we do not (save in decoration) carve groups of still-life objects, but we may paint them; we cannot to advantage perpetuate in stone the individual tricks of costume and activity, which we have a right to represent in painting as much as we like. Moreover, the living forms to which

sculpture devotes herself may also become models for painting, with the nudity of a sculptural background or the richness of the minor artist's craft, according to the painter's fancy. Is there anything, then, that painting may not do? Have we here an art with no ideal limits?

To state a universal fact is to state an obvious one, and in so doing, one ventures perilously near to platitudes. We are, however, concerned throughout our æsthetics with truths so obvious that they are ordinarily overlooked, and the reasons for the limits of painting and sculpture fall into such a class of axioms. That they have *not* been accepted as axioms by all painters, one need only to contemplate the recent Futurist paintings to prove. Painting like sculpture can represent objects only as they exist in one moment of time; but unlike sculpture it can represent them solely as the light falls upon them,

thereby limiting itself to vision alone, and it can represent these objects solely as seen from one point, thereby limiting itself to two dimensions. All this, contrary to the Futurist creed, we still believe. Painting has the world for its model, as it exists for rays of light reflected from its surfaces. When these rays are withdrawn, the painting and the world for the painter has ceased to be. There is for Helen Keller no world of painting as there is of sculpture, for all the former art has to express is concentrated in the medium which can appeal to the eye alone. We have then one instant of time for our limit, and we have one point of view chosen for representation, from which we cannot vary. If we wish to see the other side of the profile, or to follow the lines of a figure as they change from a front to a side view, we are again at a disadvantage compared with sculpture. We say disadvantage, but clearly we do not so

consider it. If we had wished an art of painting and sculpture combined, we could have evolved a technic in the coloring of three dimensions, for nothing but the fact that we do not want such an art has prevented us from having it. What then is gained by a departure from three dimensions? Why is a translation of three dimensions into two, for certain purposes and for the expression of certain ideas, a demand which in its fulfillment brings a tremendous advantage? Granting the sacrifice involved in a flat surface and a one-sense approach, what is our reward? We have found in a previous chapter that every existing object has a double avenue of approach, and that by each we gain a valid though partial account of its nature. By one we see the object in the light of the broad racial characteristics which it shares with all others of the same type. By the other we gain a knowledge of the individual

differences by which every man and every situation is eternally distinct from every other. In the latter case we do not treat our model as a *type* of the athlete, but rather as one youth running on a particular day of unique light and shadow; and in so far as it has been individually treated, it has caught the kaleidoscopic combination of an instant, and crystallized it not as a racial, but as an individual expression. If sculpture is particularly adapted from its material to the former type of expression, and if painting is the more romantic and individual art, the question still remains — why?

The explanation of painting's greater opportunity in the art of catching unique situations lies, I believe, wholly in the sacrifice on its part of three-dimensional matter, and its consequent acquiring of the right to portray material things. An enriched environment is necessary to bring out any individ-

uality. It is our reaction to a complex setting that shows us to be different. It is our reaction to a simple constant environment that betrays our racial similarity.

If we fancy ourselves, bereft of every substantial possession, upon the barren shores of a desert island, our behavior would in all probability fall into broad typical lines. All of us, including our dog, would seek shelter and food, and all of us would show fear or stubborn endurance in a fashion that would knit us closely into the struggle of all animate things for survival. If a group of trees struggle for life on a windy hill, their leaves show the same tendency to approach uniformity in size. That is, an impoverished environment does not encourage individual variation. Where the struggle for existence is keen in a social group, the wages of the different members show an artificial level, with little allowance for individual differences

in talent. Here, again, an impoverished economic life makes for a low estimate upon any variations from the type.

Now let us fancy ourselves transferred from the barren island to the complicated interior of an ocean liner. We who had bayed together with our dog for food and friends instantly respond in unique fashion to our new setting. Our first hunger appeased, the bookish man flies to the library, the bridge-player to the smoking-room, the musical man to the piano, the shy man to his stateroom, and the dog crawls under the sofa. Material cards and printed matter, stretched strings and a protecting couch, draw from us in a moment those differences which in a naked setting were only latent. Neither side of our nature is more true than the other, but each complements the other, and the cool nudity of the statuesque, with no background and no setting, expresses one

as naturally as the rich complexity of the painted setting does the other.

We may contrast the two types of treatment in particular cases. Aphrodite with the apple is a familiar figure in statuary, and we have a possible Paris in the bronze youth of the Athens Museum, who holds out so gracefully a hand from which the apple (if, indeed, it were ever there) has dropped. Devoid of setting, these figures are types of a goddess and a shepherd, a woman and a youth, hardly in any special sense an Aphrodite and a Paris; in any case with the vaguest and lightest reference to a particular situation. Compare with this the sumptuous Rubens in the National Gallery in London. Goddesses stand in a particular relation to each other, and to the bronzed shepherd who contemplates them. Soft sunlight, rich drapery, sky and trees, lovers and peacocks, all combine to make the setting

of a moment; a combination of figures related in a landscape and to each other as they could never be again with ever so slight a shift in the grouping or in the light.

Perhaps the difference in treatment is never more striking than in the great representations of death in the two arts. The Crucifixion of Fra Angelico in Florence, the Pietà of Titian in the Louvre, or the touching Pietà of Bellini in Milan, all of these represent the intensity of passion which particular saints and sorrowing friends felt in the moment of a great bereavement. The unbearable parting, the protest against a rupture of human ties, are all represented in those and in other of the most famous painted representations of death.

Equally touching, but as far as possible opposed in conception, is the spirit which breathes from such a relief as the parting of Orpheus and Eurydice. No passionate pro-

test here, but the gentle crystallized gravity of the whole race, that would not die, neither would it live forever. Behind the figure of the woman is the great human family drawn in two directions — with Orpheus toward a permanency of human ties, or with Hermes, since an eternal human life is not desirable, to a life with the immortals. It is this philosophic perspective of sculpture, the mellowing of a race experience through which it views life, which relegates it so inevitably from our houses to our temples and public places. Our drawing-rooms are places of individual reactions, and other conditions being equal, it could as little support the tempered philosophy of sculpture in its decoration as in its conversation.

It may be urged that we are comparing the sculpture of the Greeks with the paintings of a different people, and that we should rather confine ourselves to the two arts as

they have found expression in the same period among the same artists. Among the Greeks this is difficult to do, since the only paintings we have are grave monuments, where the style of painting on stone was so manifestly borrowed from sculpture that it can hardly be called a free development of painting according to its own demands. In the painting and sculpture of Italy, although both arts are under a more romantic influence, what we have said still holds true. We can see that it must be so. Since painting has sacrificed the presentation of the depth of space, all spatial objects may be its model, and the infinite variety of relations between man, nature, and manufactured objects, as they appear at one instant, from one point, and to one sense, are spread out before a selective artist for his choice. The moment chosen immortalizes a conjunction that can never be repeated.

How rich the variation in painting of interiors and landscapes, sea and sky, sumptuous costumes, delicate flowers and lowly vegetables, jesting clowns and musicians, saints and gods, hunts, tragic encounters and pastoral idylls. Every turn of the human, animal, or inorganic kaleidoscope, in so far as it presents itself to vision, may be represented, and with every shift of scene there are infinite possibilities to the artist of choosing this or that point of observation, an emphasis upon the figures or upon the setting, or upon the costume, or upon any one of a thousand relations of one part to the other parts of the complicated whole.

Sometimes, as with Rembrandt, the focus of attention is a piece of armor or a rich scarf, or the high lights of the hair. Sometimes the contrast, like Correggio's, is of soft human flesh against billowing gray smoke, or against shining linen. Or there may be mys-

terious grottoes and still pools, the deep tones of dusky drapery or architectural vistas.

If an artist does not care for all this, if he ignores the world of the inanimate, the tricks of costume and the beauties of natural environment, and if he confines himself to simple human forms, he has a right to do so, but he is a painter of the statuesque rather than a painter pure and simple. It is easy to see in Angelo's painting the influence of a sculptor's imagination. His lovely youths on the Sistine ceiling are sculptural in conception, and none but a sculptor-painter could have thought in such terms of exquisite variety of nude posture. The great painters whose imaginations were wholly within their own art have always reveled in human figures in a setting of costume and of background that forces a new creature, as it were, into our world. La bella Simonetta would not be the

same lady without her little cap and neck cord, her quaint costume and her severe background, and she is, moreover, a painter's model with the minimum of natural setting. With such simplicity of treatment it is hard to draw any line of distinction between the painted portraits and the sculptured busts of the period, which, indeed, were often colored. But if we advance into a more elaborate complicated art, we notice that the interest in "things" increases, and that serious painting is far more likely to be devoted to natural objects without living figures than to living figures with no setting whatever. The sacra conversaziones of Bellini and of Mantegna, give us the poetry of one instant of mellow sun, transparent pools, and gentle saints. We pass by an open door of a Dutch tavern or a prosperous citizen's music-room, and there for an instant we have the gay figures, the sunshine

through an open window, the shadows on the wall, and the lights as they are caught on the glistening surfaces of kettles or cabbages, maps or guitars — all made immortal in one luminous moment. All this is not less true of the most serious decorative frescoes. In the great Visitations and Nativities, Last Suppers and Crucifixions, however much, and rightly, one may emphasize the religious or emotional significance of the situation, no great "painter's painter" has ever for an instant forgotten the landscape or architectural background, the color and the drapery of the costumes, the light falling on flesh and gold and gems, the texture of linen, satin, or brocade, the silhouetting of trees against clouds, or any of the thousand secrets which light on varied surfaces reveals.

It would seem that, while in free-standing sculpture, inanimate nature cannot be independently represented, in painting, if the full

individuality of a visual situation is to be caught, this being the province of this art, natural conditions not only can but must be treated with full appreciation of their significance.

We may now summarize the results of our discussion and try to force it into a formula: —

Painting is the representation in two dimensions, by means of colored substances upon a background, of inanimate objects alone, or of these objects combined with living forms, where, by the sacrifice of the third dimension in space and the consequent failure to present matter for its own sake, the right is gained to represent all matter in its complexity of relations, and thereby to catch the individuality of any visual moment and to render it immortal.

# IV

# MUSIC

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## MUSIC

In the art of music we face what is in some respects the most difficult problem in our æsthetical analysis. Here is a system of sounds ranging from a simple succession of pitches in an isolated melody to the most complicated orchestral harmony, capable of an emotional appeal which is equal if not superior to any other art, and yet which is singularly elusive when one attempts to formulate its significance.

What does music mean? What thought does it convey? How can we call intelligent any exercise which consists of listening to sounds which we are unable to interpret as conveying a definite rational idea? We may enjoy a prelude, a sonata, a quartette, or a

symphony; but after it is over, how can we give a coherent account of what we have got from it? Why, if we cannot do so, have we a right to consider that such an art conveys a rational message?

We are attempting in this analysis, as in the former studies, to face the experience of this art with the fresh eyes of a newcomer to our planet, who is impartially sensitive and curious, and who understands nothing. We observe that music figures largely in the life of the race. We see not only that it beguiles the simplest labor or leisure, but that it is thought worthy to occupy the attention of men on the most important occasions of their lives. They are christened and married and prayed over and marched to war and celebrated and buried to music, as if in some fashion well-ordered sound was the appropriate accompaniment of all the activities of the human family. But why this is so is

certainly not obvious. The first questions are, as they have been heretofore in our study of the new art, "What is music made of?" "What is the material medium in which it lives?" and as we review the instruments by which music is produced, we find an extraordinary list, practically an unlimited variety of objects which fall into this class. Any object which can be made to vibrate regularly, and thus produce a tone, can legitimately become a medium for musical expression. Metal and gut strings, wooden and brass instruments, thin wooden reeds, stretched membranes, and brazen disks; these and many other contrivances are in one sense the material of which music is made. But the orchestral instruments lying in a heap are not the real substance of music except in a practical sense, for it must be granted, at the start, that music, appealing as it does solely to the sense of hearing, has

strictly no visible medium whatever. In so far as bodies vibrate to produce audible tones, these *tones* are the substance out of which music is built. When these bodies are at rest, the material of music has ceased to be.

We are thus involved in a metaphysical difficulty at the very outset of our discussion. Have we a right to make this distinction between music and the visual arts? Has the music substance ceased to exist when the vibrating bodies are at rest and air vibrations do not reach the ear, any more than sculpture and architecture have ceased to be when the light is not reflected from their surfaces or when there is no contact through the sense of touch? Obviously we are confused by the same difficulty which we met in our analysis of sculpture. We are inclined to make a differentiation between the so-called primary and secondary quali-

ties of substance, and to assign an objective reality to weight and spatial extension which we are unable to feel belongs to color and to sound.

Unjustifiable as any such distinction may ultimately be, in any æsthetic analysis it is certainly important. We are confident that the material of sculpture exists apart from the form which is chiseled from it, for we feel convinced that the marble is still in place when the light has been withdrawn or when the figure is in ruins. We assert the same of architecture. We become slightly embarrassed as we approach painting. We cannot so easily name its material medium. If it is color, we are not so confident that the colors are still present when the light has gone, however we may hesitate to say that the picture has, during the period of darkness, ceased to be. We become more troubled still with literature. If words are its material,

what are words, and where are words? How can we disentangle the substance of a word from its ideal significance? And with music we are completely baffled. We are inclined to throw over our assumption that every art lives in a medium of substance. Has not matter that lives or dies with the idea, and that occupies no space, reached the vanishing point of material things, and is it therefore any longer valid for discourse? Logically it must be admitted that we have no more right to assign reality to matter in one case than in the other. Stone and metal are known to us through ether waves striking the retina, or through pressure stimuli bringing about a chemical change in the touch spots in the skin. Of the stone itself, aside from these avenues of approach, we know nothing. So tones are known to us by means of air vibrations striking the basilar membrane in the ear. When the air waves cease

vibrating, we say that the tones, music's material, have gone out of existence. When the ether vibrates no longer in a particular manner, we say that the light and color have ceased to exist. The stone still exists for another sense, — touch, — but so does the musical instrument still exist for that same sense. Why are we loath to admit that the cases are similar? Simply, I believe, because in the one case we are dealing with an art that has an admitted bi-sensation approach, and in the other with an art which is rigidly constructed for the ear alone.

We see the curve in the stone, and we feel the curve. On the other hand, we see the color, but we *feel* only the canvas and paint when the light is absent. Hence our hesitancy in saying that the color still exists. So we hear the tones of a violin, but when we feel the curves of the same violin with our fingers, we find them the same no mat-

ter what the pitch or strength of the sound may be, and when we feel or see the music score, we know that it remains the same, no matter how the music is played.

Since we have no clue by sight or hearing to the stimulus of the sound sensation to be produced, we protest that where one sense cannot fill in the vacancy left by another, the medium of the art has become more ideal, in the sense that it lives strictly for one sense, or not at all.

This importance of the auditory character of music may be asserted in spite of the statements of certain people that they are able to enjoy music quite as much by reading the score as by hearing it with their ears. If they said that they enjoyed the mental image of a dinner as much as eating it, we might safely infer that they were not hungry. If they enjoyed the memory of a painting as much as seeing it, it would be hard for them

to convince us that they were fond of painting. If they object to the disturbance of music, and prefer a silent symphony read through the eye to the undeniable noise of a good orchestra striking at their ears, their position may be defensible, but I protest that they are not musical. The noiseless world of such a group of accurate score-readers would be an abomination to a music-loving man, for music, if it is anything, is a one-sense art, which has sacrificed its very life when its one sense, and that alone, cannot be stimulated.

In another way music is a peculiarly ideal art, in that it has sacrificed a material extent for an ideal end. In so far as its one-sense appeal is concerned, it shares the field with painting. Color is as absolutely an affair of the eye as is tone of the ear. But while bodies may vibrate from twelve to fifty thousand times a second and produce audible

tone, the musical scale uses tones only which vibrate between forty and forty-seven hundred times, that is between the lowest tones of the double bass and the highest tones of the piccolo flute. Again it selects from these certain tones which belong to a scale which it has selected, and it rejects those which do not. Our Western scale, handed down from the Greeks, has eight tones whose vibration rates bear a fixed ratio to each other. The Chinese have chosen a different scale, the Arabs another, the Persians another; and because even our musical material is not taken as we find it, as is our sculptural and architectural material, but because it is abstracted and idealized at the very start, we can have little in common with the music of another race whose intelligence has in the beginning taken a different turn. We can enjoy the sculpture, the architecture, and the minor arts of the Orient far more easily

than we can its music. Substance speaks alike to all, but intelligences must learn to understand one another. An idealized substance, which has been rigorously limited in its possible extent before any construction has begun, does not offer to its audience nature in the rough, but offers natural sounds schematized and classified in a serial scale, with the last possible refinement of material sound remodeled and whipped into shape by a selective mind.

The intensity of musical sounds may range from a zero point, where a rest may be of the utmost musical importance, to a volume of tone that may actually pain, and the tonal quality is practically unlimited when one considers the wealth of musical instruments, and even the individual differences in timbre between instruments of the same class.

It is not our purpose here to consider the laws of pitch, intensity, and timbre varia-

tions, the rhythms and the repetitions, the melodies and the harmonies which make up music as we know it. All of them illustrate the manner in which natural sounds have been conventionalized and adapted to different musical intelligences, and thus idealized in the very substance of the art. All of them, moreover, leave us with the questions unanswered, "What is it all for? What meaning is conveyed by this complex of sound?" These are the questions which we must try to answer.

With certain types of music it is not as difficult to answer these questions as with others. Where music and words are combined, and well combined, we have as direct and intelligible a message from the musical accompaniment as from the poem which it accompanies. In fact, in proportion as the song of a certain type is well done, the instrumental part is no more an accompani-

ment than are the words. Both contribute equally to the effect of the whole.

The great German song writers, such as Schubert, Schumann, and Franz, offer numberless examples of this direct representation of a communicable idea in the accompaniment of a song. Thus the accompaniment represents the actual sounds of nature translated into tone, or it presents a rhythm which must sympathetically arouse in the listener the same motor response that the situation described in the words would arouse.

A delicate psychologist of the emotions, the good song writer arouses the shudder, the sigh, the unrest, the suspense of the poet's words, by a rhythmic instrumental sequence, that forces one, in so far as he sympathetically listens, to fall into such a motor attitude. In Schubert's "Erlkönig," for example, the accompaniment begins with the sombre beat of hoofs, and the rush of

wind in the bass notes. The measured tones of the father contrast strikingly with the high-pitched complaints of the child, and against them both the smooth blandishments of the "Erlkönig" speak as seductively in the accompaniment as in the poem. Just as a person in fright naturally raises his voice from a low protest to a scream, so the child cries "Vater" the first time on B, the second on C, the third on D, and the last on an agonized E♭. In exact opposition to this rising chromatic, the "Erlkönig," tired of persuasion, suddenly drops his high tones which he, like all of us, has assumed as more pleasing to a child, and lapses into a sudden low growl as he throws himself upon the boy. As Goethe translates the episode into verse, so Schubert has translated the sound of the action into tone, and whoever does not hear it simply has not learned his musical letters. Schubert's "Gretchen am

Spinnrad" is no less perfect an example of the representation in tone of a rapidly whirring wheel, of increasing emotion till the wheel stands still and the spinning stops, only to be drearily and monotonously resumed.

Perhaps Robert Franz is even more subtle in his suggestions of the sound and movement of things. I believe that there is nothing in song accompaniments more exquisite than the soft lapping of the water in his "Lotosblume," or in his setting of Heine's "Wie des Mondes Abbild zittert in den wilden Meereswogen." Here is an exquisite little lyric, in which the beloved one is compared to the quiet moon, whose reflection is shattered into fragments in the sea of the poet's heart. The words are sung in an even controlled melody against a delicate dissonant accompaniment, which resolves from one short restless chord to another, like the broken ripples of the moon's reflection.

Nothing could be more delicately done to force the listener into a gentle, fanciful unrest than this succession of dissonant chords over which the melody, like the moon, rides serenely.

It might almost be questioned whether one has heard Heine, without Franz! "Morgen steh' ich auf und frage kommt feins Liebchen heut'?" expresses the dull succession of wakeful nights and dreamy days when the loved one is absent, not at all in the grand manner, but in the plaintive fashion of childhood or youth. So the accompaniment begins monotonously, and repeats two beats later on, canon fashion, the same notes that the air has just left, as if everything in the world were happening over and over in an unbearable little cycle. In "Lieb Liebchen leg's Händchen auf's Herze Mein" the subdued thumping of the carpenter pounding at his heart is as obvious in the

accompaniment as it is explicitly stated in the poem, and with so light a touch that one can forget it if he will, just as one may cease to notice his own heart-beats.

Perhaps no song is a more masterly interpretation of Heine, however, than " Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen " in its Schumann setting. Here the disappointed lover stands alone outside the door, while the violins and flutes and trumpets are celebrating within the marriage of his beloved to his rival. The boisterous orchestra inside is blaring out its own dance rhythm, while the lonely poet, out of tune with it all, is lost in his own regrets. The accompaniment introduces the wedding music, which is peculiarly haunting, but almost metallic in its fixed rhythm. It plays on uninterruptedly throughout the song, but the melody suddenly breaks in upon it on a dissonant note, and with an air as out of sympathy with the accompaniment

as the poet is at odds with the revelers within. Never does the melody begin without making a dissonance with the accompaniment, and when the voice suddenly stops, the wedding music goes on at its own mad rhythm for twenty measures, absolutely regardless of the singer; and then dies down in a set of chromatics most subtly suggestive of the recession of pitch of a distant orchestra in the ears of a departing guest. The dramatic portrayal of a mental crisis through the sounds that accompany it has reached a maximum of perfection in such a song as this.

In such examples of song accompaniments, we have as intelligible an idea of action transmitted by the music as by the words of the song, and to one accustomed to listen, one form of expression is as articulate as the other. Modern operatic music, following Wagner's lead, is one long illustration of the same thing. In Wagner's own words,

where he asserts the interdependence of music and poetry in the drama, "Only that art-variety which wills the common art-work reaches the highest fill of its own particular nature."

But any æsthetics of music must explain the appeal of sounds unaccompanied by words, and hence dependent entirely upon themselves for rational content. Here is its real problem. Can we say that a sonata represents any natural sounds modified into tone, as the opening music of "Siegfried" represents hammering on an anvil? It must be admitted that since most instrumental music, and even the greater number of songs, make no pretense whatever to convey an actual representation of sounds in nature, such an aim may be present or absent and the essential character of music remain the same. Music will still be music, irrespective of its portraiture of other sound events. In-

strumental music may definitely represent natural sounds even without words, as the prelude to the "Rheingold" represents the sounds of a flowing river; as the final music of the "Walküre" portrays flickering fire; or as the Tschaikovsky overture to "Paolo and Francesca" hurls its victims on the majestic but terrible surging of the winds of hell. But even here the imagery is suggested by the title. We are given our cue; and however much music without words or title might be able to represent the sounds of nature, it is certain that a relatively small proportion of it does, and that our satisfaction in it and our judgment of its excellence appear to be quite independent of such attempts. This province of descriptive music, legitimate as it undoubtedly is, is but one field which may be more or less entered in some types of composition, or even at different times in the same composition, and

then suddenly left, with no shock to the rationality of the musical idea. What, then, is the rationality of instrumental music, with no accurate portrayal of the sounds of nature, and with no indication whatever in its title, as to the meaning which the composer has in his mind?

As has been observed by many writers, music is the most abstract of all the arts. Whereas painting, sculpture, and poetry present a figure, a group, or an action, and allow those to arouse the emotional response appropriate to them, music presents a rhythmic sound sequence which arouses at once in us a motor response which is emotion as such; an emotion without any definite object. Thus a story may present a situation which will cause the reader to hold his breath and to project his agitation into the characters. This agitation is made up, physiologically, of quick breathing, parted lips, and a

thumping heart. These impressions the reader attaches to the action of which he reads. But let music be played with opposed rhythms, to both of which the listener is unable to respond at the same time, and the difficult adjustment to the tones brings about in him the same agitated response, but with this difference: there is no literary object; it is the quintessence of emotion, with no object at all. I may see the painting of shepherds dancing, or read of dancing shepherds; but the simple musical rustic dance represents the dance as an abstract activity. Shepherds may or may not be dancing; fairies may or may not be dancing. The dancers may be anything you like, so long as they would dance in such a fashion. More likely to the trained listener it is simply certain notes in a given key which dance. That is enough for him. He has in music relinquished his interest in the reactions to spe-

cific activities of visible objects, and he seeks instead the spirit of movement itself, as it is the same for all objects of a given class.

It is interesting in this connection to remember that there are no minor arts in literature and music as there are in visual forms. Through the ear there seems to be no possibility of communicating that particular kind of idea which the minor arts express. There may be in music or poetry as much humor and lively activity as one wills, but the presence of such interests or their expression has no analogue to the industrial arts which express these interests and these alone. No matter how rhymed or how rhythmed or how keyed; the song, the symphony, the sonnet, and the epic are equally major arts, and fall into no classification which broadly distinguishes the more from the less serious. The reason for this lies in the peculiar relation between the crea-

tor and the reproducer of the auditory arts, a relation that does not exist in the arts which appeal to vision alone. There is an especial weakness and a corresponding strength in the auditory arts which give them their extraordinarily vital character. The arts of literature and especially of music must be re-created every time they are experienced. But once the visual art object leaves the artist's hand, it is complete and finished. It has said what it has to say, and while its message will vary according to its audience (the understanding critic will get much, and the dull man little), no one steps between the artist and the appreciator. Nothing can separate them but their own temperaments. On the other hand, literature and music can, and generally must, go through an interpreter before they exist at all. Sometimes the interpreter and the audience are one, sometimes they are different people. But, strictly speaking, a song only ex-

ists as being sung, or a drama as being acted. A poem or a story may be read silently, to be sure, as may music, but because they *admit* of being re-created by an interpreter, with a different order of talent from the original artist, they may become new creations every time they are expressed. Because they may be such different things according to the voice or instrument of the interpretative artist, there arises a peculiar harmony between the re-creator and the audience which is not possible with the visual arts. Sometimes, as we said before, this may be a disadvantage. Granted yourself normal, and the Elgin marbles in a good light, and you have all there is. Nothing but violence can spoil the experience. But plays and poems, symphonies and operas, may be so disguised by poor interpretation, or so glorified by skillful interpretation, that sometimes you are getting one thing and sometimes

another. Often a variety of methods of transmission are possible, and they may seem equally good according to the mood. But here lies the very core of the situation. The auditory arts *can* vary their meaning so as to be exactly harmonious to performer or audience, and because they can, because they never refuse to respond to any human emotion, they are all fine arts. Every one is as large as man who is the standard.

If we begin with the classical forms of music, the simple melody, and the conventional harmonies of the canon and fugue, and the question is raised, "Why do you like them?" we can only answer: "We like them because the ear likes to be stimulated by different pitches, and because the recurrence of the same theme is in itself pleasing, just as *any* recurrence is pleasurable." Repetition *as* repetition is agreeable in sound as in the decorative arts, and in the classified

musical forms, even when they become most complicated, there is a charm and a blitheness which any regularly repeated action always produces. Suppose one fancies a boy running along the road — it is an insignificant matter enough. If another boy follows behind, imitating every action, it is amusing; and if a row of small boys follow each other in such a uniformity, it is a game! Why is it? Because when two springs of action voluntarily imitate each other, it betokens an amiable agreement and a humorous acceptance of the rules imposed upon themselves.

Exactly this emotion, produced by the abstract presentation of imitated sequences, we have in the early classical forms, and there is always the serenity of a game in which all parties agree to conform to the rules. It is not necessary to have a title, or to have words suggesting who and what

characters are involved in this changeful exercise. Any visual imagery which may be added, however charming, is as unnecessary a prop as would be a musical accompaniment to sculpture. If we enjoy any scene in life where particular people hurry and lag, disappear and reappear, meet, separate, rise and fall; so in music we enjoy the pure sound presentation of hurry and drag, meeting, separation, rise and disappearance, for the sound is in itself agreeable, and the motor response to all this ordered activity is the response to all well-regulated rhythms. It is only those ill-advised listeners who are obstinate visualists, who will insist that it is *moonlight* which comes and goes, or *death* which knocks at the door. It is not moonlight which comes and goes, but a certain theme as quieting as moonlight. It is not death's knock at the door, but the tone G which knocks at the violins, and in such a fashion

that we feel as we should feel if death were knocking. It is only when we are so admittedly of one type of imagery that a moon means something, and a *note* means nothing, that we shall find music unintelligible without a visual interpretation.

The change from classical to romantic music has the most direct connection possible with our emotional organism. The amiable character of two or more voices in the same rhythm and following each other in the same play of melodic sequence changes to a troubled strain of adjustment when the voices decline to sing the same tune or to follow the same rhythm.

A large part of the invention in romantic music has been in complicated rhythms, which keep together only enough to form one organism, but which pull apart in such a fashion that the motor response of the listener, and thereby his emotions, are

bound to be more or less distracted. The essential element of all romanticism is individualism, and we have passed from a simple kindly world, where melodies agree to play together, into a tenser atmosphere where each voice is more conscious of its own individuality than of the life of the whole. The romantic composer confines himself to no sound world of amiable agreements.

An obvious example of this strain of parts is in the Chopin A minor étude. A sombre resolute theme is introduced in the bass and a chromatic air in the treble, which increases in individuality till the two parts are singing opposing airs, of equal importance, at the same time. You may ignore one or the other, or you may strive to combine them; but the unrest occasioned by such a struggle of warring factions, equally lovely and equally obstinate, brings about an emotion of passionate combat with no nameable

combatants but the two halves of the piano!

In a drama the hero may struggle with his enemy; in an athletic contest wrestlers struggle with each other; in romantic music we have the struggle of opposing individualities reduced to the last degree of abstractness. We live the tug and strain of opposing sound and rhythms, and we feel that we have put our finger on the pulse of combat as such, without the distraction of any individual figures to deprive our insight of its ideal essence. The tension is greater when not only melodies but rhythms are in opposition, or especially when we are forced to a rhythm which is strange to us. We try to count it, to breathe it, as for instance in the five-beat *scherzo* of Tschaikovsky's Pathetic Symphony. We cannot accept a five-beat rhythm readily. We expect three or four beats, and we get five. The constant defeat of

expectation gives the tantalizingly haunting character to that exquisite movement. The opposed rhythms in Brahms are a study in themselves, and there are wonderfully effective rhythm inventions in Schumann. The second movement of his third string quartette begins in a three-beat *agitato* movement, *agitato* because the first two beats of the measure are always suppressed. One expects a note to start the measure; every measure a rest takes the place of the expected beat, and the result is a constantly defeated expectation, which is in itself the emotional expression of agitation. Later on the same melody appears again, but absolutely changed in character. The rhythm has shifted so that the accent comes where it is expected, on the first beat, and all is calm again!

All the variations in modern music of dissonances and opposed rhythms illustrate over and over again the psychology of emo-

tion. Sound sequences arouse motor response, motor response constitutes emotion. Let the response be simple and unified, and the pitch sequences not too unexpected, and the emotion is calm and cheerful, humorous or spirited, as the case may be. Let the rhythm be opposed to itself, and the pitch sequence after being of one type change to a different one, and the listener reflects the same character of unrest. His defeated expectation in sound becomes a type of the pure emotion of defeat.

In Franz's "Im Herbst" one has been singing F, and expects F again. Instead, "Mein Lieb ist falsch" suddenly strikes a despairing G♭, half a tone higher, and the "falsity" of the G♭ is the musical fact, *falsity* in its very essense. That the falsity in this case attaches itself to "Mein Lieb" is an incident of the poetry, not of the music.

One might conclude that, since so much depends upon the motor response in musical appreciation, the more motion in the listener the better! That this is a not unusual conclusion is evidenced by the fact that an unwonted listener so often moves his head to marked rhythms; sighing to dance to the waltz and to step off to the march. In default of this opportunity he beats time with his feet upon the floor. That this is an error is patent from the slightest knowledge of the psychology of emotion. Motor response arouses emotion, but, paradoxically enough, in so far as this response becomes extra-organic it dissipates the very emotion to which it has given rise. To keep the humor of a joke ever fresh, suppress your laughter, and let it simmer below the point of expression. To preserve a grief, do not enjoy the luxury of tears, Goethe's "Wonne der Wehmuth" — for, as he says,

it is not to the drenched but to the half-dried eye that the partly suppressed emotion retains its bitterness. So in the appreciation of music. To dance, to march, to beat time and sway the body relieves the emotion which has been excited. But if the tendencies are suppressed within the organism, and are lived out inwardly, but not allowed to dissipate themselves in overt action, then the emotional value of the world of sounds is at its height, and we live out within ourselves the idealized drama of human action in a sightless universe.

Music will seem inarticulate and irrational only to those who have the settled conviction that the world of sight and touch, and not the world of sound, is the real world. That all of us are inclined to assign an extra reality to things seen is proved by the fact that we accept the verdict of vision above hearing in ordinary matters. If the bird's

song sounds as if it came from a different branch from the one where we see the bird, we accept the sight localization as corrective of the sound. Our descriptions are of the sights of the world more often than of its sounds. We are short-lived at best; we struggle for a footing in a world that continually slips from us, and we search always for the visible and unchanging, thereby depending upon vision and upon visual imagery. So an art message that defies a visual interpretation impresses us at first sight as without rational content. But once we have accustomed ourselves to a world of time and sound where space has lost its meaning, we can admit the rationality of an art which mirrors the dynamic changes in nature by sound, as painting gives position in space by color. We feel the essential vitality of an art, which discarding all other tools presents to us at first hand the very kernel of the movement of

life, where only sounds and our own abstract emotions are the ghostly characters. Our world of experience presents a chaos, from which our reason is ever attempting to evolve a cosmos. The visual arts represent the static qualities of things. They translate the artist's transformation of the hurry of the world into one ageless instant, and we rest with them in a cleft in the rock while the world of movement sweeps by.

Far otherwise with music. Here the translation is of a different order. We see the reverse of the shield. Behind the seeming quiet of things is detected an incessant surge of life. The moment which seemed a fixed point according to one philosophy, by another is perceived as a dynamic sequence. Whereas the sculptor and the painter immortalize the static qualities of things, the musician gives not the active succession of events, which the writer interprets, but he forces from you

the dynamic reaction which is identical with that moment. You do not so much reflect it as you *live* it. Your emotional organism is touched at its very core by rhythmical sound sequences, for you feel that out of the chaos of natural forces has been evolved the very law of ordered motion.

The visual arts are dedicated to Parmenides. They represent a world with no movement, but eternal calm. But music is the child of Heracleitus. Rest is impossible. A thing is what it is only by constant change to what it is not. Behind the visible objects which development has made possible are the tides of development itself, which no man may see, but which he may hear, whether in the thunder or in the still small voice.

Any heroic figure of sculpture, painting, or literature has become fixed in our memory or imagination because of the truth of *his* nature, which each art according to *its* nature

has fastened upon and reflected in its own medium. Thus the naked youthfulness, the impetuous irresponsibility of Siegfried as a living form is the sculptor's province. Siegfried in his setting of the green forest, or played upon by the light of the forge, or in a hundred other possible atmospheres, is the painter's model. His growth, his longings for companionship, his combats and defeats, his falseness and his sombre end, are all themes for the poet, or for the poet and the musician combined. But when we enter the limits of pure instrumental music, Siegfried as an individual or as a visible type has faded away. We feel no more the struggle and the disappointments as belonging to Siegfried. Experience is linked no longer to an individual destiny. But sound and rhythm give the pure rise and fall, the hope and the defeat of life; the loneliness of a single voice meeting another which sings persistently an-

other song, the dissatisfaction of airs which will not march together, or the exquisite combination of differing but harmonious voices, which unite in a duet or chorus. If Hamlet was uncertain, in music we have uncertainty, and have forgotten Hamlet. If Werther had unsatisfied longings, or if Columbine was a coquette, Werther and Columbine are for other arts, but longing and coquetry are for music. In the most limpidly pure of all instrumental music, the string quartette, it is as if the artist, like the traditional philosopher, had put out his eyes the better to discern the reality of these invisible forces of the universe, and had betaken himself to an art where the last possible concreteness of material medium had been purged away, and where one could only listen for that which is too hidden for light ever to reveal.

# V

# ART AND NATURE

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In our analysis of various arts, we have set forth our reasons for thinking that in the fine arts the representation of certain natural phenomena in certain specific materials exhibits the essence of their nature with a peculiar fitness.

We have discovered that, given a particular aspect of the world, there is a particular appropriateness in expressing that point of view in one substance rather than another; and the result, if successful, is called a work of art.

We find everywhere, in all stages of human development, this same tendency to translate the world of experience into the world of art, and to crystallize into perma-

nent form the fleeting aspects of a varying world. Widespread as is this activity, it has not, however, remained unchallenged. There have not lacked critics in every generation who look upon art with feelings either of bewilderment or of absolute disapproval.

The attitude of the first type might be expressed in words like these: "Why all this to-do about art? What is it for? How can it be justifiable, in a busy practical world, to spend time and money upon a statue, a fresco, a decorated façade, when there is not bread enough to go around, and when so many men have not comfortable houses, to say nothing of artistic ones?" Such critics look upon a picture gallery as incomprehensible; a concert as merely an amusement for a relaxed hour; and a poet, painter, or any of the artistic brotherhood as anomalies which cannot be explained in any reasonable philosophy. "We enjoy a

fine day in the country," they say, "but why paint it? We enjoy making love, but why read about it? For what conceivable reason should we care to gaze at nude creatures in stone? And why bother to put decorations upon a building which is made to live in and not to look at?" Such an attitude, frankly expressed, Philistine though it may be, cannot be too lightly dismissed. It is an honest, and in a certain sense the most obvious, reaction of a practical mind to an unpractical activity.

The second type of objector is more positive in his attack. He does not question, but he denounces. Plato, who found it impossible to justify the painter and the poet, is the classic type of this kind of critic. There is, he says, one perfect bed in the world of ideas; the carpenter makes an imperfect copy of it in the material beds which he constructs; and the painter makes a copy

of a copy in his picture of it. He is, therefore, three removes from reality. He is an imitator of imperfection, and, as such, he has no place in an ideal republic. The poet's work is also an imitation of imperfection, and as such is without excuse. So Plato, artist that he was, dismisses art like a reluctant lover, and fearing for the safety of his city warns his disciples to be on their guard against its seductions. Plato and his followers are not insensitive, as is the first type of objector. But just because they feel the charm of art so keenly, they argue that so powerful an attraction is dangerous if it cannot be rationally accounted for. Finding no adequate excuse for it in their philosophy, they wistfully but conscientiously turn their backs upon it.

Into these two classes, the Philistines and the Platonists, widely interpreted, can be put all of the opponents of the theory that

art has in itself a mission and a message that no other activity in life can adequately transmit. According to their temperament these opponents of art would base their hopes for an ideal state on religion, philosophy, education, industry, socialism, pure food, ventilation, baths, or what-not; but art would be dismissed by them as non-essential, meaningless, or positively vicious, as the case might be.

It is certain that no defender of art would be so rash as to assert that it alone can perform all the functions for which the activities mentioned above were created. He would not insist upon substitution or comparison, but he would ask merely for recognition. Surely no one trained in artistic appreciation would so soon forget a lesson which is there continually forced upon him. This lesson is that every art has its own field, strictly limited by the laws of the substance

which it has itself chosen, and that it does not gain but rather loses in any attempt to enlarge its boundaries by invading the territory of another art. So art, as a whole, would never attempt to supplant religion, education, or pure food. All these worthy objects are as little to be compared as are a sonnet and a silver cup. But while one does not plead the substitution of art for other activities, it is necessary to analyze the grounds on which the unfavorable estimates of art are made, or still more upon which it is ignored; and to mark out, if possible, that field wherein art alone can function, if anything is to function at all.

There is perhaps one assumption common to all opponents of art. They agree in finding a wide difference between the natural object which is the model and the art object which represents it. Just as Plato insisted that the actual bed or the practical action

was necessary, but that the painting of the bed and the poem about the action were unnecessary and hence unjustifiable, so they would all emphasize the wide chasm between the living thing and the lifeless copy. The more impassioned defenders of nature against art express themselves somewhat in this fashion: "Give us life and not the cold image of life. Let us see the sunrise and the waterfall, and hear the birds sing, and be the actors in our own drama, and live under the dome of the sky. Of what consequence is a stone youth and a painted ocean compared with life? Any mother with her child is worth more than a Madonna in an altar piece; and what is a cathedral nave when one may be under arching trees in the primeval forests?" It may be said at once that this enthusiasm for natural beauty is felt by none more keenly than by the artists themselves. The whole field of æsthetics

extends over "fine nature" as well as the fine arts, and without a sensitiveness to the appeal of one, the other would not exist. It is not, then, an opposition between those who delight in nature and those who delight in art; but between those who love but one and those who love both! It may even be asserted that the artist does not love nature less because he has room for two affections, but that he is far more devoted to natural beauty than any one can be who draws the line too sharply between one province and the other. Our endeavor has been hitherto, throughout our æsthetic enquiry, to make the distinction more clear between different classes of objects. Here, on the contrary, we are forced to challenge a distinction between nature and art, which lightly made cannot be so easily defended.

Does not the excessive valuation of nature as opposed to art illustrate anew the

sentimental attitude toward life which Schiller distinguished from the simple? Is it not the sentimentalist, who is not natural himself, and whose art interests have been merely conventional, who defends himself by such a distinction between art and nature, and who turns to natural phenomena as the only free escape from a world of affectation? We can fancy the indoors man, who at long intervals has politely attended a concert or an exhibition of pictures which he does not understand, as fleeing to the open field with a breath of relief, and exclaiming, "How can art compare with green trees and the sound of a running brook?" Does this mean, however, that art and nature are so far apart, or simply that his art was not natural for him? If an art-weary man sallied forth with a group of strangers to "enjoy nature," would not his reaction be as dreary as it is now to his third cathedral in one afternoon? And,

on the other hand, if art could become to him as it now is to an artist or an art-lover, as one of the most natural expressions of life, what meaning is there left in this antithesis?

It surely does not occur to a child, as it turns from its own play to stories and pictures of children playing, that it has passed from nature to literature and the visual arts. It does not occur to a natural man out walking on a spring morning that his impulsive singing of "Hark, Hark, the Lark!" is art as opposed to nature all about him. He sings as the birds do because it is part of life, and if his flute were with him he would play upon it in as unconscious a manner. In the same fashion he would play on his piano in his own house, without a suspicion that formality had taken the place of spontaneous nature.

Where does art begin? If a bird is nature,

is not a boy nature? If the bird sings, cannot the boy? And may not a chorus of boys play and sing upon their pipes, their violins, or their trumpets and make an orchestra, which only differs from nature in that it has added a constructive human nature? So long as this human nature *is* natural and not conventional, no break occurs from the simplest natural sound or sight to the most complex, and the antithesis is not between nature and art, but between nature and *unnatural* art. If a man tells a graphic story to his friend, is it nature or is it art? The simple Greek poets were not afraid to sing, not of natural scenery, but of the deeds of men in action. So children act dramas of school and of church, of weddings, baptisms, the kitchen, and the shop. They are themselves natural, so the world of action is to them absorbing. The sentimentalist in art cannot see the poetry of the kitchen and the

shop, but he flies to the waterfall and the nightingale as the only pure realm of fancy untainted by a denaturalized human nature.

May we not, then, conclude, that, legitimate as the most ardent love of natural scenery undoubtedly is, the man who insists upon his love for nature as distinct from art has thereby passed a comment upon himself and upon his society? Has he not said, "My art has not been natural, but forced. Now I dare to be honest. Give me the pure sights and sounds of nature, which charm without disturbing"? Or it may be that the rebel against art is not insensitive to it, but that he feels that he has loved it too exclusively. After a period of retirement from the world, and of living only the vicarious life of the heroes of art, he suddenly asks, "Why have I not lived myself?" — and, like Faust, he turns his back on what now seems the formality of art, and throws himself in-

stead into what he calls the reality of natural life. In both cases the situation is the same. Men who have ceased to be wholly natural sigh in a homesick fashion for the nature they have lost; and the first activity of their former conventional life against which they are likely to fulminate is the art activity. It is obvious enough why this should be so. Art, being as it is a supremely natural activity, feeding continually upon the fullness of life, is one of the first to sicken and die when a man or a society becomes formal or under-vitalized. Conventional encounters do not afford material for either dramas or poetry. A conventional morality may found a good hospital, but it cannot write a good hymn. It shows in some degree the good sense of such nature-lovers when they refuse to be moved by the art of an artificial society, which in all likelihood is neither art nor nature.

We may grant, then, the honesty of the plaintive cry, "We are not natural, so give us nature"; but we still protest that the "nature" which such men pine to experience (unless they are confounding nature simply with the health and physical energy of an outdoor life) is no more natural phenomena, untouched by art, than it is a vigorous natural art. It is not the mother singing to her baby, who feels that the song is art as opposed to nature. It is as natural for her to sing to it as it is to love it. If she has not the art of song, she longs for it to fulfill her nature. Moreover, the finer the lullaby, and the better she sings, the better she likes it. Beethoven, Brahms, or Strauss would not frighten her. The most exquisite lullaby ever created would not be too much art, for she and the baby have enough of their own nature to understand. It is more likely to be the childless woman who sighs over

the artificiality of lullabies, and who betakes herself to the "nature" of a babies' hospital. It is not a patriot in a day of national rejoicing who finds the hymn, the chorus, the orchestra, the unveiled monument, the commemoration ode, too art-full. The most magnificent ode or architecture would not be too much art, but too little to express the fullness of his nature. It is not the religious enthusiast who, sickening of the music and poetry of real religious feeling, turns to the religion of the meadow, and protests that the sermons in the stones are enough for him. For him the world of art has used every natural power of expression to represent, what after all nature both in and out of art is inadequate to express. He would be no more afraid that such a display would turn him from the true nature of religion than would a lover be alarmed lest his serenade, if well sung, should make him forget

the lady whom he was serenading. He is so sure of his nature that the very best of his art is none too good. It is rather he who has missed the exalted moments of life, but who has automatically gone through the forms of art, which can only validly be inspired by them, who suddenly wakes up to what he has lacked, and who oddly enough makes innocent art and not his own starved nature the scapegoat! Suppose, however, that one of our critics admits all that we have said. Suppose he says, "I grant you that some emotional souls find gratification in this art expression which is their nature — but after all it is not mine. Such emotional discharge is not a feature in my own life. It becomes less and less so year by year. Moreover, an adequate art expression is not an easy matter. Art is a laborious exercise and only to be attained through a long apprenticeship. If some men must have

art, let them have it. But is there any reason why we, who can get along without it, should add this burden to a life already overtaxed?"

This is a justifiable question, and it changes entirely the direction of our defense. We need no longer protest that art and nature for artistically sensitive human beings are but two aspects of the same reality, for this has been admitted. We are simply called to defend this particular kind of nature called art when a man says that it is non-essential to life. Shall we allow him to dismiss art from his universe if he chooses, provided he stops trying to dismiss it from ours?

We can maintain, I believe with truth, that art, far from being a mere matter of taste, a relaxation for those who like it, and inconsequential for those who do not, plays so large a part in the life of a rational world

that it is not only inadvisable but impossible to escape it.

We can assert boldly that æsthetic laws are no more to be ignored with impunity than are laws of morals and reason; and that to say, "I will live insensitive to that high expression of man's nature, his art," is equivalent to saying, "I will refuse to admit that two negatives make an affirmative, or that righteousness exalteth a nation."

If we analyze natural beauty as we have analyzed the different arts, employing the same method in our questions, we should ask first, as we have always done, "Of what substance is this and that natural object composed, and what idea, if any, does it convey?" We have tested certain arts by this method of harmonizing the material with the idea which it embodied, and it seems valid to do the same with nature, which is art's model.

In nature, untouched by art, we undoubtedly enjoy certain objects in the same manner that we enjoy an art. Both its substances and our attitude are the same. Thus the natural bridges, arches, and monoliths of rocky scenery have a strictly architectural appeal. The rocky substance of which they are composed is an architectural material as in art, and their forms are architectural forms. Far from detracting from the beauty of wild nature, such phenomenal walls, caves, or pinnacles of rock give a special fascination to it, not because it is more natural, but because, to a certain extent, nature has succeeded in being architectural!

So the natural encounters of human beings in contact with each other are judged, if we watch them from without, by a dramatic standard. We watch the bargaining of a shrewd peddler with a shrewder housekeeper, the antics of the man of all work in

his endeavor to charm the housemaid, the games of children embodying their version of the activities of their elders, or the group of farmers swapping stories around a country store, with the same delight in human character revealing itself that we do in a good comedy. The material of words and sentences, scenery and costumes, is the same that it is in dramatic art; and if the housekeeper, the housemaid, and the farmers are only sufficiently sharp, coy, or consistently amusing, we call the scene up to the level of real comedy. Otherwise, it is only nature! The human voice and natural objects provide the tones that are the material for art as well as for nature, and who can say when one changes to the other? Of sculpture and painting, however, the same cannot be said. The natural material of human forms is flesh, and not the stone and metal of sculpture. The material of the world of natural scenery

is earth, air, fire, water, fish, flesh, fowl, and who knows what else besides? Certainly their substance is not paint.

If, then, we are contemplating the human form because it is real flesh; and if we contemplate either natural forms or scenery, because they are composed of real fire, air, and water, then our enjoyment is undoubtedly of nature, and not of art. If we insist that the flesh shall feel like flesh as well as look like it; that the water must be liquid and the fire burn, the flowers have perfume and the banquets taste, then it is true that our satisfaction could not be as well achieved by sculpture or painting. Here the critic is right; and it is just here that the lover of "nature" undoubtedly has his feet upon the solid ground of fact. He cannot bathe in the painted brook, or lie under the etched tree, or derive any pleasure from holding the sculptured baby. He is simply confess-

ing that the eye alone cannot give him nature. He insists upon the exercise of all his senses at once; and arts which limit themselves strictly to one sense, and to a material other than that in which the forms naturally live, cannot give him what he demands from the reality. This is a valid position. All our senses have a right to exercise, and any healthy human being will desire their full activity. But has not the eye at least *as much* a right to be exercised as the other senses? And when all the senses are active at once, is the eye really seeing all that it may? When you bathe in the brook, do you really see it? When you doze under a tree in warm and fragrant hay, do you really *see* all the lines and colors of the tree and hay? When you watch athletes running, are you not too interested in the result of the race to see their nude muscles as human forms? In so far as you grant the right

to vision, that finest discriminator of the senses, to exercise all its subtlety on the form and color of things, you must allow that an attention distracted by other senses cannot do it justice. So sculpture and painting have been created for those moments when, withdrawing from the taste and smell, the temperature and sound of things, you wish to see how they look.

If the distinctly visual character of the visual arts is kept in mind, and the auditory character of the auditory arts, I believe that it is hardly possible that one could assert honestly that he enjoyed the sights and sounds of nature, as *sights* and *sounds*, more than those of art, provided that any good art has ever represented them. Does he enjoy the sun falling through the window on the plaster wall of his room, or on a row of kitchenware, more than he enjoys a Vermeer picture? Can he honestly say that he has

seen more beauty in the red meat of a butcher's shop than is expressed in a Teniers interior? If so, let him compute how much time he has actually spent in looking at those sights, not as kitchens and shops, but as light and color. If he *now* sees beauty in them, who taught him to but Vermeer and Teniers themselves? It is safe to say that no one who ever caught the charm of real light on a plain surface, or of the exquisite colors in real meat and vegetables, ever called in question the value of Dutch painting, that least pretentious of schools, which aimed only to call to our attention what is under our very noses.

It is hard to believe that any one delights more in actual tragedies of nature than in the tragedies of Shakespeare, or that he has neighbors more entertaining than the musketeers of Dumas or Kipling. Has he ever heard a natural sound more sweet than the

shepherd's pipe in "Tristan"? Is a natural cave so much more impressive than the cavern of a great cathedral?

Curiously enough our use of words belies us. If a woman is very stately, we call her "statuesque," that is as beautiful as sculpture. A very exquisite bit of natural scenery we call "picturesque," that is, fine enough for painting. A sufficiently charming voice is named "musical," a sufficiently striking situation, "dramatic." Thus, as soon as nature shows a particular kind of excellence, we indicate our approval by calling it artistic. We can give no higher praise. We have by this very speech betrayed our conviction that nature reconstructed by human nature attains an eminence which nature left alone only at times can do by chance.

Art is barren if it does not keep to nature as its model, and if it does not strive to interpret rather than to modify what it sees.

The highest art is supremely natural, as the criterion of perfected nature is its approach to art. It is a nomenclature of convenience rather than of philosophy which divides them.

If, then, the best art is always based upon a study of natural phenomena, and the most significant, beautiful, and expressive in nature is seized upon as peculiarly fitted to live in art, how draw the line between aspects of life which grew into each other by such imperceptible degrees? How can the natural impulses of men to sing, to dance, to whistle, to color, to build, to tell stories, and to record natural phenomena in natural materials, become suddenly other than nature? We do not wish, of course, to obliterate a distinction between the practical and the artistic sides of life. Both exist, and both have their unique values. We are only anxious to put the distinction where it belongs. The natural object in becoming an object for art passes

through certain changes in emphasis and in limitation, whereby one aspect, out of the infinite number of possible aspects, is chosen for undisturbed contemplation. Natural objects when represented in the visual and auditory arts (for our present arts are all for the eye and ear) are deprived of their other avenues of sense approach, for the sake of emphasizing vision and hearing respectively. The eye and ear, because they are capable of finer discrimination, of a longer stimulation without fatigue, and of stimulation from a distance rather than by contact, are peculiarly adapted to give us representations of the world without entangling our own organism too much with the stimulating bodies. Our attention need not be diverted from the object to ourselves, as it is likely to be in stimulations of smell, taste, pain, and the muscle senses. Helen Keller derives undoubted æsthetic enjoyment from touch, and

smell, but with most of us those senses are too untrained to give us intelligent conceptions of anything. The so-called lower senses may all be involved indirectly in the imagery of literature or of other arts, but directly they can as a general rule only affect but not communicate. Since art is essentially a communication of a particular view of nature from one mind to another, these less articulate senses are of little direct value for art. Art sacrifices them to nature.

This sacrifice which art makes for the sake of a peculiar message is, as we have seen, its constant characteristic. Art as a whole sacrifices the lower senses. The separate arts make a still further sacrifice of certain materials, certain sensations, certain emotions, certain practical advantages which the natural world might boast, all for the sake of the consequent emphasis which they may place upon a view of nature, which otherwise in

this multitude of appeals might remain unnoticed. For art, the subtleties, the fine distinctions of nature are all-important. They are important for their own sakes. It will not allow us to overlook them. It is not willing that confused practical experiences shall constitute all that we know of life, but it insists that separate aspects of it are worth knowing in themselves.

The human family exists not only to be reared, reformed, loved, or hated; but to be looked at, to be listened to, to be understood. The fine arts, by gently withdrawing men and things from the circle of our immediate practical influence, make us see and hear them as we never did before. We have leisure to contemplate, since we cannot change. Busy as we may be with handling sinners, we forget what sin is in its essence. A great epic like "Paradise Lost" or the "Inferno" re-informs us. We forget in the midst of

particular disputes the essential stupidity of war until a novel like "War and Peace" makes us more intelligent. We are only irritated by dull people until the ladies of Jane Austen or the farmers of Thomas Hardy, reëducate us as to the charm of absurdity. We may have been kind to workingmen, but did we ever see them until Millet pointed them out?

Is there any advantage in truth for its own sake; in knowing things as they are, because they are that way? If so, who but artists, from the Greek tragedians and Shakespeare to Hawthorne and the Russian novelists, have taught us how crime once committed eats into varying temperaments? Who but artists have shown us how fatally a settled boredom reacts on a Madame Bovary or a Hedda Gabler? Moralists pass judgments on them; but artists present the facts for us to make our own judgments. Or it may be

that it is no matter of conduct, for art is an impartial interpreter of life, but that it is a matter of lights and colors or the subtle suggestion of words that it wishes to make more plain. Perhaps we do not know how colors are reflected on each other or how they change in shadow. We may not know how delicate is the modeling of a face. We have never thought to "listen" for the stillness of a Grecian urn, until an artist more sensitive than we has educated our dull ears or has known how to express what we felt but vaguely.

How is America ever to be understood by critical outsiders? Science and industry, newspapers and cables have not accomplished this revelation of our character. Only when we are revealed by a national art, a literature, an architecture, a music, will aliens understand.

In time, who knows what we may all see for ourselves in nature? But we shall see and hear it through our apprenticeship in art.

Art does not, like science, inform us of the world in practical results. It simply presents a given aspect of things, removed from certain customary relations which confuse its individuality, and transferred for the sake of greater emphasis to a world of its own. It is interpreted by the artist in a way to pass on inevitably the vision he has caught.

The artist is, in the strict sense, not a teacher, not a reformer, not an inventor or a man of action, but a *seer*. He has better eyes and ears than we, and it is his function to look and to tell us what he sees. Moreover, it is not only his function to pass on what he sees, but to transmit the emotion with which he sees it. Most of us are not only dull of vision but slow of feeling. We not only do not see the reality of things, but we do not know how to take them.

The great tragedian presents to us the reality of human catastrophes, and he does it

in such a fashion as to draw from us the pity and fear which are their due. The sculptor not only presents the abiding possibilities of the human body, but he will not let us take them lightly. He so presents them that we must be awed as he has been by their essential majesty.

The musical composer reveals to us the possibility of rhythms and sounds at play with one another, and forces us to be oppressed or amused by their inter-relations as he has been. The fact of the possibilities of sound in a Beethoven *scherzo*, if we know it artistically, must be reinforced by our feeling the humor of the thing as Beethoven did. Otherwise we have not heard. Surely no one but a man who is willing to confess that he does not care to *know* human nature, color nature, sound nature, word nature, in its completeness, and who does not care to share the emotions which this nature arouses in

the mind of men more sensitive to the high truth of things than he, can dare to say that art is for him a negligible quantity. It is also a negligible quantity for his horse; because it feeds the mouth of neither, and the spirit is not hungry.

If any one protest that he can see these things for himself in nature, let him try it. It is not so easy. He must be taught, and that not by information alone, but by contagion. He must have daily intercourse with art works as with acquaintances, for emotional nature cannot be transmitted by a formula.

There are other things in life, but this one province is the artist's own. He only can cut a cross-section of life experience, of whatever sort, and, by freeing it from all entangling relations, construct for it an enduring form where we may contemplate it, feel it, and thereby *know* it.

Art is the great sensitive intelligence. Science tells us what things were, and what they shall be; but art tells us what they *are*. It transmits the fact and the emotion which is its due. It crystallizes from the chaos of experiences the relations of a moment, the pose of an instant, one clash of motives, one mesh of absurdities, one trick of words, one of the infinite combinations of sound with motion; and that which would have slipped by us unnoticed has been made eternal. Art is that high activity of nature by which it interprets its own emotional reaction upon itself.

Only he who is so entangled with life that he is indifferent to knowing it, can turn his back on that pure mirrorer of his own activities who, for every secret which she has revealed, has still a thousand locked within her breast.

THE END

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